The Reading Teacher

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Meeting the Needs of the Individual

IN THE old one-room school we expected to have children on different grade levels, and we met their needs as best we could. Then as our schools expanded and, in many cases, consolidated, we thought our problems were over. We put all the fourth graders in one room with one teacher, all the fifth graders with another teacher, and so on.

It seemed like the perfect solution, for now all would be using the same reader, all would be working the same arithmetic problem. Somehow we hoped that all would be doing the same thing at the same time.

But as we get to know these children, we realize they are very different even though they are all given the same grade label. In the fourth grade, for example, some are very immature and some very grown-up. Some are reading at a second grade level, and a few are racing ahead to a seventh or eighth grade book.

They have different interests, too. Some are curious about natural science. Some are curious about gadgets and inventions. Some have a feeling for color. Some want to hear about distant times and places. Some prefer competitive sports. Some are eager to create and build. And as their interests vary so do their talents vary from one to the other.

These children may have the same grade label—Fourth Grade—but they are unique individuals. We see that our Fourth Grade is really a one-room school with many grade levels represented. To teach these individuals, we must know their needs and be ready to meet them.

In this issue of THE READING TEACHER, Dr. David Russell has served as Guest Editor, assembling a group of articles dealing with the subject "Meeting the Needs of the Individual."

Nancy Larrick

In the February Issue

Dr. Paul Witty will serve as Guest Editor of the Feature Section of the February issue dealing with the general topic "Reading and the Exceptional Child." In this series of articles the exceptional child is considered to be the child who is not typical—the gifted, the physically handicapped, the slow-learning, for example.

An introductory article has been prepared by Dr. Witty. Four others in this section will be an article on the physically handicapped by Elberta E. Pruitt, one on the mentally handicapped by Frances A. Mullen, one on the gifted child by Walter Barbe, and a bibliography of reading materials for the gifted and for the slow learner by Miriam A. Peterson.

Cherishing Differences in the Reading Program

by David H. Russell
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THIS ISSUE of *The Reading Teacher* is concerned largely with the Number One problem of most classroom teachers—that of providing an effective curriculum for children who differ widely in abilities, interests, achievements, and all other characteristics. Ever since children have been taught in groups, the problem of providing for differences has existed, but it has not always been recognized. Indeed, the reactions to the problem may be summarized historically into five main periods in terms of attitudes to the problem appearing down through the years:

(1) Teachers were largely unaware of individual differences and taught groups as a unit. This attitude persists today, especially in some high schools.

(2) Through the study of child and adolescent development, teachers became aware of differences in developmental status in a class group, but were not always able to translate such knowledge into classroom practice.

(3) School people were aware of differences and made some efforts to provide for them by groupings, by promotion policies, by special classes, and by other *administrative* devices.

(4) Most teachers were aware of differences and attempted to provide for them by two or three *curricular* devices, such as sub-grouping within the class and varied assignments and materials, but these teachers worked without the help of a well-planned program involving all parts of a school system.

(5) School people have become aware that individual differences not only exist and must be provided for, but that they should be cherished in a well-planned, total-school-system program.

Providing for Differences

Today, educational psychology in books such as those by Tyler (7) and by Anastasi and Foley (1), has given us complete accounts of what the differences are and their causes but has not given many leads to providing for them in the curriculum. However, creative teachers, supervisors and school administrators have developed practices which may be utilized in a school as a result of study, discussion, and consensus by the faculty group. Such a program is based on the premise that differences in children are not something to be ignored or eradicated, but desirable characteristics to be fostered. It assumes that there are common learnings which all children in a democracy need to achieve but that they achieve them at different times and in different ways. It further proposes that differences are desirable, that along with common or core learnings, there are individual interests, abilities and talents which must

be cultivated. In regard to the reading program, it suggests that different children learn to read at different times and in different ways, that they develop varied skills and interests in reading fiction or science or hobby instructions or readers.

Just as there are individual differences among children, so there are differences among school systems and the same provisions for differences are not equally effective in all communities or neighborhoods. However, most modern schools employ some of the following methods of providing for differences in varying combinations:

(1) Sub-groupings within the class.

(2) A variety and range of instructional materials within one class.

(3) A variety and range of learning methods and experiences.

(4) Variations in expectations, standards and responsibilities for different children.

(5) Individualized teaching.

(6) Use of "free" periods in which children exercise individual choice of activities and materials.

(7) Readiness activities, not only in beginning reading but at all stages of learning.

(8) Retardation and acceleration — largely administrative devices which are probably not the cure-all they were once believed to be, but which may be used in exceptional cases.

(9) Remedial instruction, individual or group, and special laboratories and clinics.

Many variations and combinations of these methods are in use in schools today. Probably each method has weaknesses and is not suitable for some schools and classrooms. The list, however, represents considerable progress over a system of mass education where all children were treated alike.

A philosophy emphasizing differences suggests that there is no one best method or even best combination of these methods for all schools. In most situations a group of the methods is probably superior to reliance upon one particular method. Some schools may develop procedures other than the nine listed here. But the important thing is that the procedures be planned and adopted on an all-school or all-system basis. Teachers and supervisors, and perhaps pupils themselves, must share in planning what procedures are to be used and must evaluate and modify these procedures as they are employed week after week and month after month.

Applications to the Reading Program

All of the methods listed for providing for differences have applications to the reading program, and a number of them are considered in more detail in this issue of *The Reading Teacher.* Smitter's and Whipple's articles encourage the use of subgroups within a classroom group, but indicate that the smaller groups should be formed on bases in addition to the children's present status in reading achievement.

Teachers usually welcome suggestions which give variety to their programs. McCullough suggests that tests are one type of teaching materials which give important help in

providing for differences among children of the same class. Chall's article discusses materials from the point of view of reading difficulty and gives the sort of information a teacher needs when helping a child to select a book of suitable difficulty.

In addition to the articles of this issue, other practical aids to the teacher in providing for differences have been appearing recently. Teachers who are looking for books which are high in level of interest but low in level of difficulty will get much help from the secondary bibliography of Hill (4) and from booklets such as those of Durrell and Sullivan (2) and of Lutz (5). Wulfing (9, 10) has two practical monographs on helping the retarded reader and the gifted reader. The volume edited by Witty (8) and one by Hildreth and Brumbaugh (3) suggest some ways of challenging the child who is gifted verbally, who has a knack for ideas. McCullough's (6) monograph suggests how teachers may plan work with different groups in reading and still keep a class profitably occupied.

The evidence seems clear that many schools have progressed beyond the stage where individual differences are ignored or a few administrative devices seem sufficient to provide an adequate reading program suited to the needs of all children in a class or school. Such schools are entering an era where children's differences are not only respected but fostered. They delight in the pupil who may be slow in reading but is talented in rhythms or committee work. They challenge the child who is gifted verbally to read far beyond his grade level and they help the child who is below the usual reading achievements to advance and to enjoy materials on a level at which he can profit by the content and the method of instruction. They believe that some children may develop into good readers of science books or current affairs, that some children may find their chief reading through life in escape fiction, that others will be more than living up to their capacities if they become regular readers of *Life, Reader's Digest,* and *Saturday Evening Post.* These schools experiment with varied bases for grouping, with different types of instructional materials, with individual assignments, with occasional acceleration and other procedures. They not only recognize, they *cherish* differences. Thus they help provide, through reading and other activities, the reservoir of varied abilities and interests which each new generation must bring to an expanding culture.

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Good Practices in Grouping

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TODAY, most basic reading activities are organized in units centering around a suitable theme of interest to the class, such as aviation, the community, wild animals, and children of other lands. Because the theme is similar for the entire class, it provides a common framework for instruction. Within this framework the reading experiences are highly diversified through group instruction. Different groups read for different purposes, use different reading materials, and receive different kinds of guidance from the teacher.

Patterns of Grouping

No single pattern of grouping is adequate. On many occasions, the children are classified into two or three groups according to their general reading attainments, with pupils shifting from group to group as needs change. For example, a child develops rapidly in many abilities, or develops special needs which can best be met in another group.

On other occasions, the children are classified according to their need for instruction in some special reading skill, for example, rapid skimming or the use of the dictionary to obtain the meaning of words. They are organized into two groups: one requiring instruction and the other having no need of it, either because the children have already mastered the skill or because they lack readiness for it.

Then, too, numerous groups are formed to give all members of the class much practice in a short time. Perhaps the children may be paired to practice oral reading, observing certain standards devised in a teacher-pupil planning period. Of course, this procedure is of value only as the reading materials are fitted to the in-

dividual child's abilities. Also the teacher should circulate among the groups giving as much guidance as possible.

On still other occasions, children's interests may provide the basis for grouping. In culminating a unit on "tales of old," one fourth-grade class formed interest groups to present a story review. One group engaged in preparing story dramatizations; a second group, in writing simplified versions of stories for children in a lower grade; a third, in setting up an exhibit of books with written captions; and a fourth, in summarizing the unit on a series of bulletin boards. Interests and needs in formulating and expressing ideas in a social situation determined the classification into groups.

Flexibility in Grouping

Good grouping practices never form rigid lines between good and poor readers. Flexibility and tentative groupings on a variety of bases are useful in preventing rigidity. Every effort should be made to avoid, in both our speech and our attitudes toward the groups, anything which might be interpreted as segregating children because they are slow learners. We cannot afford to be insensitive to the effects of children's opinions. When we imply that certain of the children are slow, the implication is harmful not only to the children so designated, who may easily develop feelings of inferiority, but also to the rapid learners because they are prone to conclude that they can succeed without diligently applying themselves.

Another way to avoid undesirable distinctions involves planning some activities to be shared by all groups. These may be story telling, dramatizations, book-sharing programs, individual reports, display of construction and art work, and almost any of the activities designed to introduce or to culminate a unit of reading. In such activities all the children are encouraged to contribute.

Purposeful Self-Directed Activities

If the class is organized so that the teacher works with some of the children while one or more groups work alone, the teacher has an opportunity to encourage those working independently to take responsibility and to be sensitive to the rights of others. By using positive incentives she can help her pupils decide for themselves how best to act when others are busily at work. After much practice the children can learn to move around the room as necessary and even to talk over problems with one another without disturbing other groups.

The teacher will need to provide for enjoyable and purposeful independent activities. Much of the effectiveness of her instruction will depend on her avoidance of meaningless seatwork or busy work.

There are many possible types of worthwhile independent activities for children. One kind is the free reading of books on the unit that is underway. Of course, this activity taxes the teacher to assemble enough suitable books. The children using library and work tables can gather around numerous attractive books and become absorbed in reading them.

Examining pictures on the unit to

see what can be learned from them is always helpful. In the middle grades children may be invited to write a statement giving one new fact learned or even a paragraph summarizing ideas gathered from a whole collection of pictures which can be passed easily from child to child. Also composing captions for pictures to be posted in the classroom is a good language-arts activity. Of course, all such written work should be carefully evaluated by children and teacher.

Instead of giving the conventional list of questions to be answered *after* reading, why not ask the children to try to answer fact questions *before* reading and then to check their answers by reading? One class attempted this with much pleasure in connection with a factual selection on the habits of squirrels. The teacher gave no clues as to whether or not the oral answers preceding the reading were accurate. Instead, after replies had been given to all the questions, she indicated that some answers were excellent but that others were either incomplete or wrong. She then encouraged the children to read the story in order to verify their own information.

Other types of independent activities are many and varied. In the very early grades, for example, the children may finger paint, observe or care for pets, cut and paste pictures into a booklet, decorate boxes they are planning to use for some purpose, model with clay, make birthday cards or decorations and materials for a party, and look at picture books, children's magazines, and illustrated catalogs. In Grade 3 and above independent activities include: writing the last three lines of a poem when given the opening line; writing an original fable after reading and discussing many fables; matching poems with pictures in preparation for making an illustrated book of poems; copying new words learned in "my own vocabulary book"; working on scrapbooks; preparing labels for exhibits; copying experience stories or group compositions to take home; preparing articles for the class or school newspaper; writing at the blackboard; and looking through books to find stories on a given topic and stacking the books for use.

Variety is essential. If children are expected to carry on the same type of independent activity day after day, they find it monotonous and tend to fritter away their time, and fail to think. This is just the opposite of the attitude for which we should strive — one of thinking actively, choosing, experimenting, judging, reasoning, and imagining.

Activities Under Direct Teacher Guidance

In working with groups it is desirable that the teacher take a leisurely approach. She should not feel hurried to get to another group since the introductory activities determine to a large extent the value of the subsequent reading activities.

Whatever the school grade, whether Grade 1 or Grade 8, the teacher's aim in introducing new reading material is the same. She is endeavoring to relate the content to the child's experiences, foster interest in it, establish motives for the reading, and

anticipate and overcome difficulties, including those presented by unfamiliar words. Often in a stimulating introduction to a story, the teacher will refer to the pictures in the book, and will build up on the board questions that the children in the group wish to have answered. Before oral reading she will perhaps encourage the children to devise suitable standards, e.g., "try to interest everyone in what you are presenting," "read loud enough for everyone to hear."

Sometimes the group activity will be concerned with the outcomes of rereading. In a seventh-grade class, for instance, a group had reread a vividly written selection to identify sound pictures (e.g., the galloping of horses, the clatter of plates); color pictures (e.g., through the bleached silver grass); odor pictures (e.g., the mellow smell of coffee); action pictures (e.g., tramped steadily, turned an expert somersault); and descriptive pictures (e.g., towering cliffs). In the class period that followed, sentences and paragraphs were read aloud and comments made to identify and support the students' choices of word pictures.

A further important activity consists in appraising work carried out by the children independently. If they have illustrated some portion of what they have read, time should be devoted to having the group evaluate the illustrations in light of the context. This is an excellent activity for improving comprehension and interpretation of material read. In the case of written work, evaluative activities will lead the children to appraise their spelling, handwriting, and expression. The appraisal ought to place emphasis chiefly upon the choice of the best ideas met in reading and upon good clear expression that others will understand.

Building a group composition which utilizes the ideas the children have gained through silent reading is a useful activity. The composition may be either creative or informational. If, for example, the group has been perusing poems about dogs such as Winifred Welles' "Dogs and Weather," with the teacher's guidance the children may develop on the board a poem about the dog they would like to walk with. On the other hand, in informational composition, the children may wish to make a summary record of what they have learned or to prepare explanations of articles they are placing on display in the room. Together the children may decide on the ideas to be included, on the order of presenting them, and on the specific statements to be made, as the teacher or a capable child records these on the board.

Perhaps no use of the teacher's time with the children is more significant than that spent in guiding discussions based on silent reading. Here we must remember that children require help in language arts other than reading. The children should be led to do most of the talking. The teacher should give enough guidance to insure that the discussion has real educational value for all those concerned —the slow, reticent pupil as well as the bright pupil in the same group. (Grouping, of course, does not equalize needs but merely reduces the range of individual differences in some few

respects.) As soon as possible, children ought to learn to follow the rules of courtesy so well that the raising of hands is unnecessary. Standards to guide the discussion may be developed on the board by the group with the help of the teacher. Examples:

We try to say something worth hearing.

We give everyone a chance to talk.

We listen carefully to what others say.

We ask someone to explain anything we do not understand.

We talk only when no one else is talking.

We keep to the subject.

We talk so that others can hear easily.

Whenever working with a group of children, then, the teacher stresses purposefulness, child activity, participation by every child in the group, and the integration of reading with the other language arts.

Guidance Through Grouping

Good grouping in the classroom enables the teacher to help the child develop his capacities to the fullest extent. With fewer children to work with at a time, she can give greater attention to the individual child's needs. Recognizing that his progress in reading is dependent on many factors, she can acquaint herself with his intellectual, emotional, and environmental responses. She is then in a position to adapt instruction to the particular child and thereby to prevent maladjustment.

One of the big outcomes we are striving for today through the reading activities is success and satisfaction. This has become an outstanding goal because of the fact that personality problems are frequently associated with reading failure. Therefore, in our group activities, let us note at once any child who seems immature, restless, worried, discouraged, retiring, overly ambitious, or unusually aggressive. Would it not be wise to ask ourselves: Why does this child act in this way? How shall I interpret his responses? In terms of our best answer we can then create in school the best possible situation for freeing the child of tensions, worries, or wrong attitudes either toward himself or toward his classmates. Let us connect with group reading a maximum of fun, enthusiasm, and individual and group success. Thus, grouping aids in the development of the child's personality.

However, grouping cannot achieve everything desirable in the classroom. It is no panacea for all ills. Rather it helps us to carry on as nearly individual work as possible in a fairly large class. It enables us to meet children's needs much better than if we gave instruction to the class as a unit. The degree of success achieved through grouping will depend largely upon the energy, understanding, and skill of the teacher. The good teacher will read such reports as those contained in this issue of THE READING TEACHER, will experiment, and will develop further those procedures which prove successful.

Supervision for Better Grouping

Grouping is most likely to succeed

when supervisors and administrators facilitate the teacher's efforts. Among her needs is an adequate number and variety of reading materials for her pupils. Thus the school administrator interested in improving grouping should order many individual books, sets of supplementary books, and a supply of basic readers at the children's reading levels. He should not mechanically order a reading textbook for the given grade in numbers sufficient to supply each pupil with a copy.

Also, the school leader will need to determine the difficulties which the teachers face in using grouping to the best advantage. He may invite teachers to describe their handicaps, then follow with definite help in overcoming these. This will consist, perhaps, in short meetings where teachers exchange ideas and share the good techniques they have worked out, in aid to the individual teacher in grouping her pupils and fitting the reading materials to their abilities, in arranging visits for teachers to observe the reading activities of other classes, and in preparing concrete bulletins of suggestions based on superior practices in schools the country over.

The Pros and Cons of Grouping

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GROUPING practices arose as a result of a system of mass instruction. As knowledge increased regarding wide variations in human nature and rates of growth, it became apparent that teaching the same subject matter in the same way to a group of thirty or more children whose learning rates differed widely was not effective practice. Many children did not learn because the pace was too rapid. Others did not learn because they were bored.

Grouping appeared to be a practical solution to this problem of mass education. It was an attempt to individualize instruction or at least to cut down on the wide range of differences within each class. In this way a class could be broken into teachable units. The premise was that children placed in small groups in which all of the children are relatively at the same stage of learning can be taught more efficiently and will learn better than when taught as an entire class.

Other Factors Affect Learning

Although certain validity in this premise has been demonstrated, factors other than homogeneity of achievement level or the small size of the group appear to affect learning.

These other factors may be even more important in learning than the similarity of the learners in their stage of achievement and may provide an additional basis for grouping.

For example, a beginning class in swimming may be comprised of a group of children all of whom are in a similar state of ignorance about swimming. Some may be inspired to learn by children who know how to swim, others may be fearful of the water, and still others may be completely disinterested and only undertake the project because of the pressure of their families. All of the children in the class may be at the same level of competence, but because of difference in interests and attitudes they probably will not respond to the same kind of teaching.

The foregoing illustration raises the question of the value of homogeneity as a basis for learning and upon what factors homogeneous grouping should be based. Clearly, a variety of factors may be used, such as the level of the skill, the children's ability to understand and follow directions, children's personality qualities, interests, or eagerness to learn.

Another question immediately comes to mind to which no answers from research are available. Does the homogeneity of a group in regard to any factor improve learning more than the absence of such uniformity? If so, which factors should be kept homogeneous? Do children learn to swim or read better when they are all at the same skill level or when some of the children set a pace for the others to follow? Do they learn best when all those who are eager to learn are in one group, all those who are reluctant or timid in another group? Or if children learn best in a group in which a range of differences exists, what are the limits to this range?

Motivation to learn is complex and although much study, research, and theorizing have been done about it, the impetus that makes children want to learn is probably still the most mysterious of psychological processes. Sometimes children learn just because they are expected to. Other times they resist learning for the same reason. Some children learn when the task is easy, others are bored by an easy task. Sometimes they are inspired by a peer whom they admire or a teacher who is challenging and exciting, or by the content itself if it opens new doors to them. We have all experienced a great upsurge in wanting to learn due to an unusual experience, an exciting personality whom we wish to emulate, or a particular challenge to learn.

This type of motivation is a windfall and cannot be planned for in the life of a child. Neither, however, should the possibilities for such motivation be overlooked, for it is the eagerness that results from such stimulation that spells progress. The group in which a child finds his greatest interest may be the one in which motivation is strongest and consequently he learns best. Grouping solely on the basis of achievement level may not allow for this type of motivation.

Grouping by Achievement Level

Probably one of the most difficult

problems of motivation is in the so-called slow-reading group. Frequently the interest level of the reading material for such a group is below the maturity of the children. For example, it is difficult for a slow-reading group of nine-year-olds to work up much enthusiasm for the saccharine activities of little children, or for a group of twelve-year-olds to become excited about stories written for eight-year-olds.

Often, too, the reading skills of the slow group are so meager that the children have difficulty in following the story or grasping the meaning of the content. If all the children in this group are at a similar stage of reading skill, no one moves the story ahead. Their efforts do not bring enjoyment of the story. The boredom and discouragement that result are not effective motivation. It has long been evident that both children and adults learn from one another. Homogeneity of reading skills as the basis of grouping has the disadvantage of materially decreasing the opportunity to learn from one another. This disadvantage is particularly apparent in the slow-moving group.

The procedure of dividing a class into slow-moving, average, and fast-moving groups raises certain issues as to optimum motivation for each child. However, definite advantages of this type of grouping have been well demonstrated. One advantage is the mere reduction of numbers of children to be taught at one time. The teacher can work with five or ten children more effectively than with thirty. A group of five or ten can interact with one another. Thirty must, for the most part, follow the directions of the teacher as interaction in so large a group often becomes chaos. In working with a small group a teacher has an opportunity to know better and to help each child more than if no grouping were used. When children are grouped according to reading level, material more nearly appropriate to the group's ability can be chosen than when children are taught as an entire class. A maximum success for slow readers, and a minimum of boredom for the fast ones are hoped for and frequently achieved for many children when they are grouped according to reading level.

On the other hand, one of the baffling problems that has not been satisfactorily solved through achievement-level grouping is that of the child who seems to have more difficulty in reading than his measured ability warrants. Such children frequently comprise as much as twenty per cent of a given class and are found in every group. Although reasons may exist, such as inferior health, emotional disturbances and the like for this low achievement of certain children, many children show no such clear-cut causes for their lack of progress. Only the lack of motivation seems to be apparent. These poor achievers suggest that the teacher might experiment with various types of grouping and evaluate motivation and reading progress in various arrangements.

Social Structure of the Group

Inasmuch as motivation for all learning is largely social in nature, the

social structure of the reading group may be of greater significance than is now realized by some teachers. Several research findings suggest possibilities for experimentation in terms of social groups. In a recent study of group psychotherapy[1] it was found that two major factors were basic to the success of this group operation. The first was the ability of each individual to communicate with the others in the group. That is, the individuals involved were helped only as they understood one another. If one person's problem was so far outside the realm of the others' experience that no empathy or identification could take place, no therapy occurred. Similarity in background and experience seemed important to successful therapy because this similarity meant that the individuals could communicate with one another about their experiences and problems. Each one understood to some extent what the other fellow was talking about.

It may be that group therapy is not analogous to a reading group, but social factors undoubtedly operate in both situations. It is quite possible that communication may be a basic requirement for the success of any group either in reading, arithmetic, student council, or group therapy. For example, if the children in a reading group are so diverse in background and experience that what they read brings diverse understandings, the usual reading group might have a negative effect upon the learning of those children who felt out of communication with the others.

Personality Structure of the Group

In the same study of group therapy another factor was found to be essential to the success of group functioning. This was the similarity of the individuals in their ability to withstand hostility or dominance. It was found that certain individuals could not tolerate a dominating or hostile individual, but withdrew from the group when such an individual was present. In the presence of a dominating person, certain ones did not participate, but let the dominating individual take over.

Most of us have had the experience of having different feelings toward the different groups with which we work. In certain groups we feel free to express ourselves, to ask questions about those things we do not understand. In other groups, due to the presence of certain individuals, we shrink from self-expression or free participation. Certain individuals have a restraining influence upon us while others encourage us to learn.

This effect of personalities upon one another may have little to do with differences in competency. The self-assurance or verbosity of one person may destroy it in others, or the drabness or lack of enthusiasm of several personalities may reduce the entire group to a dead level. The personality structure of a reading group may be of great importance to the progress of the individual children in it. For example, it is quite possible that a timid child may learn best with a group of children with permis-

1. Florence B. Powdermaker and Jerome D. Frank. *Group Psychotherapy*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953.

sive personalities regardless of their reading levels.

Social-Class Structure of the Group

Studies of social class[2] have also revealed that children from various socio-economic groups have different sources of motivation. Indeed, motivation is often a differentiating characteristic of social class. Middle-class children have been shown to be most anxious to learn, to have more drive for school achievement, while lower- and upper-class children are inclined to be satisfied with the status quo. Accordingly, children from varying social classes who are placed in groups according to comparable scores on achievement tests may not respond in a similar manner to the method of teaching used. Certain children may need a different kind of teaching or entirely different type of material from the others, depending upon their social background and drive to learn.

Evaluating Current Practices

Grouping within the classroom is currently done largely on the basis of comparable test scores or at least on the basis of the general achievement level of the children. The above studies are cited, not to discount present criteria for grouping, or even to suggest that grouping be done on the basis of any single item mentioned, but to raise additional factors that may be considered in the formation of groups. It is often healthy to evaluate the purposes, the problems, and the outcomes of an established school practice.

Fifteen years ago, assigning children within the classroom into slow, average, and fast-moving groups was definitely a step ahead of the single-textbook-for-all method. In the light of recent research, it is now time to evaluate grouping procedures, to see what issues are involved in such groupings, to see what purposes are served and determine whether criteria other than achievement level may be effective as a basis for classroom grouping.

Research regarding personality development, social structure of groups and social class influences on learning insert new elements into theories of learning and motivation. Learning is now recognized as an aspect of personal development and not as a purely mechanical process. Groups, as the milieu in which learning takes place, are probably as important influences on children and their learning as inherent capacity or any other environmental stimulation.

The Social Influences

Educators and psychologists have just begun to study seriously the social influences upon learning. Grouping is the teacher's most potent method of manipulating these social forces within the classroom. Grouping should not become a static or an arbitrary procedure. Teachers should view grouping as one of the growing edges in education, an area of study that needs the classroom research that only perceptive and well-informed teachers are able to contribute.

2. Allison Davis. *Social Class Influences Upon Learning.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1948.

Reading Tests Help Provide for Differences

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ONCE I visited a copper mine where mountains of discarded material were heaped. I was told that here lay valuable ore which was being passed over until some less troublesome and expensive way could be found to extract it from the other rock particles. Fortunately, it is possible for industry to return to these natural resources when America feels that the need and the proper time have arrived. But with children and reading tests it is different. If we administer and score a test and take only the obvious results, the wealth of information that remains unexplored does not benefit the teacher or the child; and it is the child who pays in undiagnosed skills and unmet needs.

There is a simple method of treating this test material so that the teacher may easily act upon its findings to help individual children. No longer are we justified in taking a superficial glance at tests that have been carefully prepared to reveal more than can be grasped in a glance. Surprisingly we concern ourselves and the children with their responses on the unstandardized items on a workbook page, when, at the same time, we settle for a simple total score on a carefully standardized test.

In a sense, and with no disparagement intended toward the diagnostician, it might be said that the standardized reading test is a silent, five-cent, mechanical substitute for a highly paid diagnostician. Forty or more minutes are taken from the child's learning time to employ this five-cent device in the discovery of facts which the teacher herself would have to find out in a much more laborious and uncertain way. However, typical uses of the results of these tests are not making the most of the forty minutes and the nickel.

What Does the Score Tell Us?

Theoretically, the reading test score can be converted into a standard score by reference to a table in the manual of directions and can be translated into a reading grade level. But that reading grade level is presented on the assumption that a given child's performance has been typical of that of a theoretical average child. The assumption is that, for instance, he successfully completed the vocabulary test up to a certain point and the comprehension test up to a certain point. If he did, the grade level is probably close to the truth. But chances are that he didn't. Chances are that he had an irregular, individual pattern of success typical of himself more than typical of anyone else, including the average child. Chances are that the reading grade level assigned to him cannot be translated into satisfactory placement in a basal reader.

When we add to this the fact that reading tests do not agree among themselves on the appropriate reading grade placement for a given child, we begin to realize that any simple representation of so complex a set of skills as reading can only mislead us.[1] Indeed, the only semi-safe way of determining a child's reading grade level from a standardized test is to find the hardest item he was able to read with considerable success and compare it in vocabulary level, complexity of construction, and maturity of thought with the various books of a basal reading series.

This kind of comparison takes a skill which many young teachers have not developed, but a happy thought is that it can improve with experience. Another happy thought is that teachers and administrators who do know how to make such comparisons can devise a table showing the books in the basal series that are comparable in difficulty to the various paragraphs in the standardized tests ordinarily used in the school system. This type of assistance will reduce the amount of time a teacher must devote to the study of an individual child's test and may even lead to the abandonment of a poor test for a better one!

Suppose, however, that we have a standardized test which contains six or seven subtests. Surely this solves our problem of diagnosis! Surely it doesn't, for at least two good reasons. One reason is the same as that for the total score on the entire test—the individual child is so frequently unique rather than typical. In fact, look at the normal curve and observe the overwhelming proportion of children who are not average!

The second reason resides in the fact that many subtests test a single skill at one difficulty level. For instance, poetry comprehension may be tested on the basis of a child's response to a single poem, speed of reading may be judged on the basis of a child's speed of reading a single passage, or use of the index may be tested on the basis of one index. If the child fails the subtest, we do not know whether he lacked the skill or was merely tested on a passage too difficult for him in other respects. If the child passes the subtest, we do not know the depth or height of his skill—that is, how well he can perform the same function in more difficult material. The dimensions of a child's mastery of the skill are lost because the shortness of the subtest has given the child too little opportunity to show them.

Is this important? It is important if the teacher cares to know what to do next to promote that skill. In outlining, for example, is the child at the three-main-heading level or can he identify the proper subheadings? Can he select the subheadings and headings for himself, in a lengthy list, or can he operate only in a more limited way? How simple must the organization be for him to grasp it? How simple must the vocabulary be? How familiar the thought? What types of material does he outline more successfully than others? From the point of view of test use, the test

1. Pflieger, Elmer F. "A Study of Reading Grade Levels." *Journal of Educational Research*, XLII (March 1949) 541-6.

which offers too many subtests has reduced rather than increased its utility. Certainly the score on the subtest cannot be taken at face value, and the profile chart on the cover of the test must not be taken literally.

So we cannot trust the total score, and we cannot trust the subtotals. What next? Well, imagine everyone in the United States standing at his mailbox, taking out the long-awaited, important letter and then eagerly studying only the outside of it. How silly! Yes, but that is what we have been doing with tests for years. It is time that we look inside.

Let's Look Back of the Score

If the test we have is the kind that has increasingly difficult vocabulary and comprehension items, we should look to see how far up in it the child had fairly solid success, and compare the difficulty of that last item with the difficulty of the books of the basal series of whatever material the child is reading. If we use a test provided by the basal series as part of its evaluation program, we may not have to make this comparison, for the manual of directions may tell us the reader level for which each item in the test was designed. In this way we can decide upon the levels of comfort in reading and tentatively determine the achievement groupings in the class.

Some standardized tests, like the Iowa Every-Pupil Tests of Basic Skills (Science Research Associates, Inc.), test within a limited area of difficulty (such as Grades 4 to 6), but offer the possibility of some diagnosis. The manual of directions tells the kind of comprehension tested by each item in the test. By making a chart (the names of the children down the left side and the items of the test across the top), we can see at a glance which children need help in which types of comprehension.

So, in our group activities, we can give the questions requiring those skills to the children who need most practice in them. Sometimes we can assemble all the children who show a marked lack of one type of comprehension skill and give them exercise in its use with material easy enough for the poorest reader to grasp.

In tests like the Nelson Silent Reading Test (Houghton-Mifflin) and the Durrell-Sullivan Reading Achievement Test (World Book), the manual does not indicate which items test what comprehension skills, but it is rather simple to find among the items requiring reading for facts or slight inference those items which test the ability to grasp the main idea of a passage. A chart similar to the one described above can readily reveal those children who need help in reading for main ideas or reading for facts.

Tests Examining Depth and Breadth of Skill

It used to be thought that a test could show either level of reading comfort or variety of skills mastered, but not both. That theory has been fairly well exploded with the appearance of tests which have attempted both with some success. These tests, which include both independent tests and tests associated with basal reader

series, examine the depth and breadth of reading skill simultaneously, the depth being determined by the difficulty of passages successfully completed and the breadth by the types of item answered correctly at each difficulty level.

Some of these tests go further, into abilities such as the ability to guess meanings from context, to analyze words by initial consonant and other analytical means. With these tests we can derive a rather comprehensive sampling of skills, actually identifying the initial consonant, the type of syllabication, or what not, that is troubling certain of the children in our classes.

The Diagnostic Reading Tests by Triggs and others (Science Research Associates) are available for grades four to six now, as well as for higher levels. The authors have offered a survey test for brief analysis, but have also constructed a diagnostic battery which requires several sittings to complete. At the completion of the latter, the examiner has a comprehensive picture of the child's vocabulary, word analysis, and comprehension status.

The Cleveland, Ohio, City Schools a number of years ago produced a battery of tests for primary reading levels, which also required several sittings for completion. Eight or ten tests for each level covered about a dozen skills, and cross-reference was possible. That is, if a child missed a certain comprehension item, it was sometimes possible to find the word missed in the vocabulary test which was the word needed in the comprehension item. This finding suggested that the trouble was vocabulary rather than necessarily the complexity of the thought. Similarly, the presence of the same words in the tests of word meaning and word recognition showed whether the child's difficulty with a word was knowledge of its meaning or recognition of its form.

The tests developed for the basal reader series tend to be in keeping with this trend toward longer, more analytical, more useful tests. Their contents do not have the virtue of covering material beyond the vocabulary and difficulty of the reader series concerned, nor do these tests supplant the independent tests in indicating the generalized success of a total reading program for an entire school system. But for the teacher who uses or intends to use the basal series, they tell whether the teaching goals have been accomplished and designate the individual needs still to be met.

In Conclusion

The years have brought us greater sophistication about the problem of evaluating the reading program. We have passed from evaluation limited to standardized tests to a broader conception of the term. We have passed from taking a total score as the whole truth, through total disillusionment and disbelief, to a clear-eyed vision of the function of tests and our function in their use. It is to be hoped, now that we know better, that all of us—test authors, school administrators, and teachers—will do better. Only in this way can the child do better.

Ask Him to Try On the Book for Fit

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Because children differ so much, their reading materials, like their shoes, must be fitted to them. In a pair of shoes, what makes a good fit? One thinks immediately of appropriate size. However, it is not the only consideration. The purpose and preference of the wearer suggest, in addition, such factors as style, color, durability. Thus, our definition of fit, for shoes, includes not only comfort, but need and motivation.

Let us turn to books. What do we mean by a good fit? First, one may think of appropriate level of difficulty. That is, whether the book is written in a way that can be read and understood by a child. Second, a child's interest in the book—whether he likes the content and manner of presentation. Third, whether the size and style of type, illustrations, and other physical characteristics are suitable.

The readability of a book has at various times been used to refer to one or more of these three aspects of fit: Is it understandable? Is it interesting? Is it legible? Within recent years the term readability has been used mainly to refer to comprehension difficulty; more specifically, the level of difficulty found from an application of a readability formula. While a readability score based on a formula is helpful in judging the suitability or fit of a book for a reader, it does not give the complete picture since it may overlook important aspects of interest and legibility. As we shall see later, it overlooks important factors of difficulty as well.

The three aspects of readability are of course interrelated. Comprehension difficulties may to a certain extent be overcome when a child is keenly interested in a book. Teachers frequently report that a child will put forth more effort with a book on a subject important to him. He will be able to read it although it is above his general level of reading ability.

The level of difficulty may, in turn, influence the child's liking for the book. If the book or passage is so difficult that he cannot follow the author's thoughts, he may give up although it is about his favorite subject.

Physical factors can affect both the appeal and difficulty of the material. Although the subject matter and level of difficulty of a book are appropriate, the child may refuse a book that is too long, has long paragraphs and print that is too small.

The task, then, in judging readability is to match the reader and the reading material. Suitable matching involves a knowledge of the reader (his reading ability, interests and needs) and a knowledge of the selection or book (its content and appeal, its difficulty, and its legibility).

Appeal of the Book

What content is interesting to your

fifth graders? The best way to find out is to ask them. The answers will vary considerably and will repeat on a small scale, what has been found in most studies of large groups of children. That is, interests are chiefly an individual affair. However, when preferences of wide age groups are studied, some trends appear. The main factors related to these trends seem to be maturity and sex.

For example, children of ages six to eight will tend to be interested in animal stories, stories of children and familiar experiences, nature and simple fairy stories. They prefer their stories to be lively, to have elements of surprise and humor.

Beginning at about age nine, the interests of boys and girls usually begin to differ. About this time, boys begin to prefer stories of adventure, mystery, sports, and realistic animal stories. For some boys, interest in science may become strong. Girls, however, seem to prefer stories about home and school life and children of other lands.

These findings are just a few of the generalizations found in studies of children's reading interests. The findings from such studies are helpful in suggesting books for a classroom library or for an individual child. But it is not uncommon to find a second grader asking for an adventure story and a fifth grader interested in a fairy tale.

But what of textbooks? Can we assure a good fit in terms of interest when content is determined by curriculum needs which may not always coincide with interests of pupils? If we know that pupils are not interested in the content, then the book's style and format will have to carry the major burden of interest. In general, the more the textbook relates its content to the experiences of the children, the more personalized the approach, the more interesting they will find it.

Physical Factors of the Book

What are the physical factors that make a book readable? Studies have been made of the typography most suitable for children's textbooks. Such characteristics as size and style of type, leading, and illustrations were considered. Significant research has also been made in children's preferences of drawings and pictures. In general, pictures should be relevant to the text, adequately captioned, and sufficiently explained in the textual material to be of greatest aid to comprehension and interest.

Comprehension Factors to be Considered

An impressive amount of research has accumulated since the early 1920's on the factors within reading materials that are significantly related to comprehension difficulty. Essentially, only four kinds of elements have been measured reliably and used in readability formulas. They are listed below in order of importance.

1. *Vocabulary.* In general, the higher the percentage of uncommon and different words, the harder the material. Vocabulary difficulty has been measured in different ways: words outside a particular easy word list such as the Dale list of 769 words, the first 1500 words of Thorndike's

list, Dale's list of 3000 words known to fourth graders, or words within various thousands of Thorndike. Difficulty has also been measured by the number of syllables per 100 words or the number of monosyllables or polysyllables. All measures of vocabulary are interrelated and using one in a formula is usually sufficient. Every readability formula employs some measure of vocabulary, and once it is used, the others listed below add somewhat to the prediction of overall difficulty, but they do not add a great deal.

2. *Sentence Structure.* This is usually measured either by sentence length (average number of words per sentence) or by per cent of simple sentences. In general, the longer the sentences and the higher the proportion of complex sentences, the more difficult the material. Every readability formula that contains at least two factors employs a measure of sentence structure.

3. *Idea Density.* Indirectly, idea density has been estimated by the relative number of prepositional phrases. In general, materials with a greater proportion of prepositional phrases have a higher concentration of ideas and a more complicated style. Prepositional phrases also contribute to sentence complexity. Hence average sentence length and relative number of prepositional phrases are highly interrelated.

4. *Human Interest.* Many quantitative studies have found that such measures of human interest as personal pronouns, names, nouns with gender, and sentences addressed directly to the reader are related negatively to difficulty. Once a vocabulary and sentence structure measure is included in a formula, human interest factors add little to overall prediction of difficulty.

Are these then the only factors that make books easy or difficult? Can we assume that an estimate of hard or long words and sentence length is the entire story of difficulty? Not exactly. The factors outlined above are restricted mainly by the need to determine a quantitative measure. Other studies and experience point to important factors which have not yet been measured reliably. Some of the factors overlooked by the major readability formulas follow:

Conceptual Difficulties. Readability formulas overlook the possibility of conceptual or meaning difficulty in relatively common and short words. "To be or not to be, that is the question," is considered easy by every formula since all the words are short and within most lists of easy words. The word *strike* is considered easy whether it means "to hit something," "to miss a baseball," "to find something," or "an industrial walkout." In short, none of the formulas gives adequate weight to the meaning of the particular word in its context. Only structure is considered.

Since formulas consider each word separately, they may also overlook difficulties inherent not in the individual words, but in combinations of relatively known words used in an idiomatic or figurative sense, e.g. "brought to light," "a change of heart," "in plain sight," "come by money."

The vocabulary measures of the

formulas fail to distinguish between different kinds of difficulties—those that are difficult because relatively unknown to young children or those that are inherently difficult because they are abstract, vague, or extremely technical. *Asparagus, cafeteria, democracy,* and *cooperation* would all be considered hard by any of the existing vocabulary measures, whether based on word lists or on word length. Yet words like *democracy* and *cooperation* are inherently more difficult since they presuppose a higher level of abstract thinking.

Many readability studies have found abstract words to be characteristic of difficult material. However, an abstract word count has not been included in any of the major formulas. Such a word count would be difficult to measure. Also it has seemed sufficiently related to the usual measures of difficulty (word length or rarity) so that the latter were substituted for efficiency.

History and geography textbooks are difficult particularly from the conceptual standpoint. Such materials can, to a certain extent, be made more understandable through the use of common words whenever possible. Essentially, though, they will remain difficult because the subject matter is abstract and removed from the direct experience of most children. Thus, to increase the readability of such material, concepts and technical terms should be limited, adequately explained within childhood experiences when first introduced, and repeated sufficiently for mastery. This suggests, also, the teacher's role in making a book readable. With adequate preparation and sufficient use of concrete experiences, many of the abstract and technical terms in a textbook can be made meaningful to the readers.

Organization. Considerable evidence is accumulating on the influence of organization on the comprehension of expository material. This evidence comes mainly from experimental studies designed to validate the effect of simplification based on a readability formula. Findings from these studies indicate that while lower readability scores have some beneficial effects on comprehension, as much if not more f the effect may be due to the reorganization of the material. In fact, negligible effects on comprehension have often been found when changes in vocabulary and sentence structure were made without an accompanying change in organization. When organization was also changed either through enumeration, anecdote, personalization or summary of main points, many benefits were found.

Many studies on the value for effective study of using topic headings, questions, author's enumerated points, and summaries suggest that such devices in a text aid comprehension.

Related to organization and to conceptual difficulty is amplification of main ideas. One study showed that adding detail through explanation and example to paragraphs taken from typical social studies materials increased the comprehension of intermediate grade pupils. The increase in comprehension was found although the readability scores of the original and "amplified" versions were substantially the same.

To date, there are no definite criteria for the best organization. Considerable research is needed to arrive at the crucial aspects of organization for materials of different content and difficulty.

Value of Readability Formulas

Although readability formulas do not yet adequately provide for conceptual and organizational difficulties, they have their usefulness. A readability formula can give some evidence of the difficulty of the material. It should be used, however, with the understanding that it is only a first approximation to difficulty and to overall fit, which includes considerations other than comprehension difficulty.

The Lorge, Dale-Chall, Flesch and Yoakam formulas may be used to estimate the difficulty of materials of intermediate grade difficulty and above. Each of these formulas gives an approximate grade level of difficulty which is comparable to grade level scores on standardized reading tests. Thus, a grade level of 5.1 from any of these formulas indicates that children with approximately fifth grade reading ability should be able to read the material with adequate understanding.

Validity studies indicate that when these formulas are applied to the same material, the relative positions of difficulty assigned by each are substantially the same and agree favorably with relative difficulty as determined by tested comprehension or judgment of experts. However, considerable variation has been found in grade level predictions. In a recent study Russell and Fea found that the Yoakam grade levels for juvenile books, that is, grade levels determined by using the Yoakam formula, averaged two grades higher than the other three formulas, and about two grades higher than librarian's judgments. Ruth I. Smith, on the other hand, found the Yoakam, Dale-Chall and Lorge formulas to give substantially the same grade levels to fourth grade social studies materials. It is wise, therefore, not to consider the grade level from any one formula as an absolute measure of difficulty. Experience with a formula and actual use of the material rated help to estimate whether the grade levels are adequate for practical purposes.

Practical Considerations

Does a teacher have to make her own readability evaluations? If these cannot be made, can publishers' grade recommendations be used instead?

Unfortunately most readability appraisals of commonly used textbooks and supplementary materials have not been published. Ratings on books are scattered in unpublished doctoral and master's theses and in various research journals. The Winnetka list is a good source for obtaining difficulty levels of popular children's books published before 1942. No comparable list is available for textbooks. Teachers have therefore relied on publishers' grade designations. Although studies indicate that recently published textbooks are easier than they were a decade ago, there is insufficient evidence as to whether they are now suitable for the majority of children in the grade for which they are intended. At any

rate, they will usually be unsuitable for children reading significantly below grade level. For retarded readers, materials are needed that are "at grade level" in maturity of content and format but "below grade level" in difficulty. The book lists of Carpenter, Durrell and Sullivan, Harris and Strang are helpful in locating such materials.[1]

Summary

Effecting a good fit between a book and a child involves a knowledge of the child and the factors in the book that make it interesting, understandable, and legible for him. A readability score from a formula, together with a consideration of other factors of comprehension difficulty, legibility, and interest will help effect a good fit. However, these are only trials. They may be compared to fitting shoes on a model rather than on the child. The ultimate test of the readability of a book or selection, therefore, is whether the child does read it and find it rewarding. Only then is an individual child being helped in an individual way.

1. Carpenter, Helen M. *Gateways to American History: An Annotated Graded List of Books for Slow Learners in Junior High School.* New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1942.

Durrell, Donald D. and Sullivan, Helen Blair. *High Interest Low Vocabulary Booklist.* Boston: Boston University School of Education, 1952.

Harris, Albert J. *How to Increase Reading Ability.* New York: Longmans, Green and Co., Second Edition, 1949, pp. 556-67.

Strang, Ruth et al. *Gateways to Readable Books:* An Annotated Graded List of Books in Many Fields for Adolescents Who Find Reading Difficult. New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1952.

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Lorge, Irving. "Predicting Readability," Teachers College Record, XLV (March, 1944), 404-19. Mimeographed instructions are available from the author at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Spache, George. "A New Readability Formula for Primary-Grade Reading Materials," *Elementary School Journal,* LIII (March, 1953), 410-13. Sample worksheets are supplied by the author, University of Florida.

Yoakam, Gerald A. *A Technique for Determining the Difficulty of Reading Materials.* Unpublished study. Copies may be obtained by writing to the author at the University of Pittsburgh.

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World-Wide Trends in Methods of Teaching Reading to Children and Adults

by William S. Gray
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DURING the past year Unesco has directed a world-wide study of current methods of teaching reading and writing to both children and adults. The specific purposes of the study were: (1) to identify, analyze and describe the various methods of teaching now in use; (2) to secure data whenever possible concerning their effectiveness, and (3) to consider the implication of the findings for the improvement of teaching among children in underdeveloped areas of the world and among illiterate adults. A preliminary report of the findings has been published.[1] The study will continue during 1953-54 in the hope that the final report will provide a more complete summary and evaluation of current practices and will serve as a valid guide to teachers and school officers.

The Specific Problem Considered Here

Because of limited space, this article is restricted to only one aspect of the broader study—the nature and variety of the methods used in teaching people to read. It was believed that a discussion of world-wide trends in methods of teaching reading would be of interest to all teachers in this country, and might stimulate critical thinking concerning some of the reading problems which we face today.

Several sources of information were used in making the Unesco study. A survey was made, first, of as many general discussions of methods of teaching reading as could be secured from various countries. An analysis was then made of approximately four hundred different sets of materials used in teaching people to read. Of this number more than a hundred sets for children and about the same number for adults were studied personally by the writer. A similar number at each level were analyzed by specialists in reading in countries for which the materials examined had been prepared. In addition, personal observations were made by the writer of experimental procedures and current practices in six countries. Whereas the sources examined were by no means exhaustive, all continents and a large proportion of the countries of the world were represented. It is believed, therefore, that the findings to date are fairly representative of the world as a whole. Vigorous effort is being made, however, to extend

1. William S. Gray, *Preliminary Survey on Methods of Teaching Reading and Writing*, Part I (Survey of Theory and Practices) and Part II (Summary of Suggested Practices). Educational Studies and Documents, Vol. V. Educational Clearing House, Unesco, Paris, July, 1953, pp. 72 and 66.

the scope of the study and to make it far more inclusive before the final report is published.

Prior to describing the types of methods used, attention is directed to three general findings of important significance. The first is that the methods used in teaching reading differ widely today in practically every country. As a result, reading specialists and teachers everywhere are deeply concerned about the relative merits of different methods of teaching reading and are eagerly seeking to determine which will serve their needs best. A second finding is that most discussions of methods of teaching reading now available are concerned with the techniques appropriate in developing skill in early reading activities. Only limited attention is given in the literature of most countries to methods appropriate in developing competence in reading at more mature levels.

The third finding is that methods of teaching pupils to read vary in so many respects that it is difficult to classify them satisfactorily. More frequently than not they have been classified abroad into two groups on the basis of certain psychological processes involved in reading. These groups have been designated as "synthetic methods" and "analytical methods." A third group, called "analytic-synthetic methods" has been added recently. It combines into a single teaching procedure, the steps which formerly characterized both synthetic and analytic methods. This plan of classification was adopted by the authors of *The Teaching of Reading,*[2] which summarizes the replies of 45 countries to a questionnaire sent out by the International Bureau of Education. When the report was discussed at the Twelfth Annual Conference in Geneva, convened by Unesco and the International Bureau of Education, the basis of classification used was so vigorously attacked that it did not seem advisable to use it in the current study. After considering other possible plans, the writer adopted a two-fold scheme of classification which groups methods of teaching reading, first of all, in terms of their historical development and, second, in terms of significant distinctions within each of these groups.

Early Specialized Methods

One of the chief characteristics of many of the earlier methods of teaching reading is that they were highly specialized and focused attention upon a limited number of aspects of reading. Because of their very nature they fell into two sub-groups. One group approached the teaching of reading through emphasis on word elements which were combined as rapidly as learned to form words and were used more or less exclusively in recognizing new words. The second group began with words, or larger language units, and gave large emphasis from the beginning to the meaning of what was read. Through a process of analysis word elements were sooner or later identified and used in developing skill in word recognition.

2. International Bureau of Education, *The Teaching of Reading.* Paris: Unesco; Geneva: International Bureau of Education, 1949.

1. *Methods Based on Word Elements.* The various methods which start with the use of word elements will be considered first. They are based on the common assumption that the most effective method of teaching reading is to focus attention first on word elements, namely letters or syllables, as contrasted with meaningful units such as words or sentences. As word elements are learned, they are combined to form words which in turn are used in forming phrases and sentences. The mental process by which larger units are thus formed is called synthesis. The word elements which are mastered are used also in the recognition of new words. In this process both analysis and synthesis are involved. As revealed by the survey this is the most widely used procedure in teaching reading today.

The various methods of teaching which start with the mastery of word elements may be subdivided into three specific groups depending upon the word elements emphasized. The first is called the "alphabetic method" in which the pupils first learn the names of the letters. These are then combined to form syllables and words. It has often been referred to as the "spelling method" because of the wide use of "spelling-out" words in efforts to recognize them. This method is used only rarely today.

The second is called the "letter-phonetic method" because it makes use of the sounds as contrasted with the names of the letters. The proponents of this method contend that the sounds of the letters are far more valuable aids to word recognition than their names.

The third group is called the "syllabic-phonemic method" because syllables are used as the key units in recognizing words. As syllables are learned, they are combined to form words. The proponents of the method maintain that the use of syllables is preferable to that of letters because consonants can be pronounced accurately only in combination with vowels. This view is supported by practically all phoneticians. The syllabic-phonemic method is admirably adapted for use in the case of languages which are highly syllabic such as Spanish and many African languages.

The common procedure involved in all these methods is defended by proponents on two grounds: the first is that by learning word elements and acquiring competence in combining them into words, the learner develops accuracy and skill in word recognition; the second is that the early mastery of such skills results later in great economy of time and effort in teaching the supplementary attitudes and skills needed. A third argument is that in many countries the only teachers available have learned to read by such methods. Inasmuch as they have had little or no professional training they are able to teach by only the method used when they were taught to read.

The use of synthetic methods has been criticized widely on two grounds. The most obvious weakness is that so much attention is given to learning word elements and word recognition skills that little or no attention is given to other essential aspects of

reading. As a result, pupils often fail to develop a vital concern for the meaning of what is read, to become fluent readers, or to acquire keen interest in reading for pleasure and information. The second criticism is that in starting with elements of words these methods disregard the child's preferred mode of learning. This issue will be discussed more fully in the next section.

2. *Methods Based on Meaningful Language Units.* The second group of specialized methods is based on the common assumption that use should be made from the beginning of word wholes and larger language units in teaching pupils to read. When these units have been recognized as wholes, attention is directed to the smaller units of which they are composed. Sooner or later, the constituent elements of words are recognized. The process by which words and larger units are divided into smaller units is known as analysis. Consequently the various methods belonging to this group are referred to as "analytic methods." The statement should be added that as soon as word elements have been identified they are used in recognizing new words. In this process both analysis and synthesis are used.

The methods belonging to this general group are of four types. They vary with the nature of the language units on which early instruction in reading is based. The first historically is known as the "word method." According to this method, the words are presented as wholes, usually in meaningful context. They are mastered through repeated recognition in meaningful phrases and sentences, through the use of "see and say" techniques, and through tracing and writing exercises. Paralleling such steps, attention is directed to the details of words. In the course of time the use of phrases, sentences, and stories was substituted for that of words. This gave rise to such terms as the "phrase," "sentence," and "story" methods. The proponents of each successive method based their claims to superiority on the ground that phrases, sentences, and stories were more meaningful and, as a result, more effective units for teaching reading than the use of the units which had preceded them. As each such unit is learned as a whole the separate words of which it is composed are mastered. Sooner or later, each word is broken down into its elements and used as aids in word recognition.

Two groups of arguments have been used in support of the use of analytic methods. The first is that since reading is a thought-getting process, use should be made from the beginning of meaningful reading material. Learning to read thus becomes an interesting, enjoyable and rewarding process. Since it has been shown experimentally that meaning is a vital aid in word recognition, the use of methods which are based on meaningful language units promotes progress in word recognition as well as other aspects of reading. The second argument is that the use of analytic methods harmonizes more closely with the child's natural mode of learning than does the use of synthetic methods. Psychological studies

made both in this country and abroad have shown clearly that children recognize forms and ideas as wholes, somewhat vaguely at first and then proceed gradually to a recognition of details. Any method of teaching reading which conforms to this principle is often referred to abroad as a "global method."

One of the chief criticisms of this approach is that so much effort is made to develop the attitudes and skills involved in meaningful reading that word recognition is often neglected. For example, many teachers postpone needed emphasis on word attack skills so long that pupils become seriously handicapped and retarded. Other teachers give little or no training in word analysis on the assumption that pupils should acquire the necessary understandings and skills largely through intuition. Many of the reading specialists in Europe who have visited schools in this country attribute our large number of needlessly retarded readers to failure to give adequate emphasis to word attack skills. Properly conceived, methods of teaching which start with meaningful language units should provide well-balanced emphasis on both a clear grasp of meaning and growth in the skills of word recognition.

For many generations the early specialized methods of teaching reading retained their distinctive features unaltered. In the course of time, however, significant changes occurred in most of them. These changes aimed to overcome weaknesses which had been revealed through the use of given methods, to meet theoretical objections pointed out by critics, and to facilitate ease and rapidity in learning. As a result radical differences developed among the various methods belonging to any of the major groups and subgroups referred to above. As a result, a given method of teaching reading can no longer be evaluated solely in terms of the characteristics of the general group or subgroup to which it belongs. Its various distinctive features must be identified and examined carefully in the light of pertinent evidence before sound conclusions concerning its validity can be reached.

Recent Trends in Teaching Reading

During recent years, two additional changes have occurred in methods of teaching reading which are very significant. They have been stimulated by changing conceptions of the purposes of schooling, by the results of scientific studies of reading, and by the ever-increasing demand for improved methods of teaching. So many changes have occurred that it is very difficult to classify them. For the purpose of this discussion they will be referred to as "Eclectic Trends" and "Learner-Centered Trends." As will be noted later these two trends are not mutually exclusive. They have been adopted for use here because of their value in focusing attention on certain recent trends that are very significant.

1. *Eclectic Trends.* An impressive feature of many of the recently developed methods of teaching reading is that they combine into a unified program, techniques that formerly characterized contrasting methods.

This trend was clearly recognized in the recent report on reading[3] by the International Bureau of Education, which classified methods of teaching as "synthetic," "analytic," or "analytic-synthetic." The explanation offered for the use of the "analytic-synthetic" method was that it combines into one teaching procedure the advantages of both the synthetic and analytic methods.

Similar motives have given rise to most eclectic methods. As a result of experience and experiment, it is found that certain advantages attach to given teaching procedures. Some of them may be integral parts of highly specialized methods; others may evolve from successful classroom practice or carefully planned experiments. As soon as the value of a given method has been established, it is used by teachers or authors of readers in efforts to develop more efficient reading programs. The analysis of readers made by the writer showed clearly that most of the current systems of reading used in this country and a surprisingly large proportion of the series published abroad during the last five years are eclectic in character. A distinct advantage of the latter trend is that it makes possible balanced emphasis from the beginning on various important aspects of reading. Through appropriate choice of teaching techniques, it is now possible to provide instruction in reading that will promote the development of all the reading attitudes and skills needed in meeting the current reading needs of both children and adults.

2. *Learner-Centered Trends.* A second recent trend is based on the assumption that the development of the learner is the chief purpose of schooling. Accordingly, the readers' interests, immediate concerns, previous experience, special aptitudes and needs receive major attention. As a result the content of the materials read have been radically changed and vitalized and the teaching techniques used have been greatly enriched and adapted to individual differences. A survey of these developments indicates that they can be classified readily into three groups according to the nature of the materials used: author-prepared, learner-conceived, and integrated-instructional materials.

Author-prepared materials are used far more widely today throughout the world than any other type. A comparison of beginning reading materials published during the last decade (since World War II in most countries abroad) with those published prior to 1940 shows that the former are more colorful and attractive, and their content is based on common experience of the age-groups for whom they are intended. As a rule, the same characters are used throughout beginning books to heighten interest, and specific selections are organized in the form of simple stories or episodes which have definite sequence. An analysis of the methods used reveal three significant trends: they provide specific emphasis on the development of all the attitudes and skills involved in efficient reading at the respective grade levels; they adapt the methods of teaching word

3. *The Teaching of Reading, op. cit.*, p. 24.

recognition to the characteristics of the language involved; and they adjust the specific methods used to individual needs.

Learner-conceived materials differ from those prepared by authors in two respects: they are based on the immediate interests and concerns of the group taught; and they are prepared more or less largely by pupils with such guidance from the teacher as may be necessary. The chief advantage that attaches to the use of such materials grows out of the fact that the sight of the words when reading calls forth vivid associations and feeling reactions similar to those that occurred when the experiences on which they are based took place. As a result, progress in learning to read is rapid. Several limitations attach to the use of such materials: the heavy demand which their preparation makes on the teacher's time and energy; the poor form in which they are often prepared; and lack of proper vocabulary control to facilitate learning. All that was said concerning variations in the teaching techniques that accompany the use of author-prepared materials applies also to that of learned-conceived materials.

The so-called integrated instructional materials which are used in many centers both in this country and abroad differ from the use of experience materials, as described above, in at least one important respect. Whereas the latter are used primarily in teaching pupils to read, the former, which are also prepared largely by pupils, are used as points of departure for many of the activities of a school day. The understandings and skills acquired during one learning period thus reenforce and facilitate the mastery of those emphasized during other periods of the day. Because of the greater flexibility of such programs, adjustments can be made readily to the varying needs of pupils. Inasmuch as teachers who make use of the integrated plan are guided by principles rather than specific rules, the teaching procedures used vary widely. Those who oppose this plan claim that it is complex in nature and can be carried on effectively only in small classes and with highly trained teachers.

Concluding Statement

Little more has been achieved by the foregoing discussion than to review very briefly various methods of teaching reading and to point out significant trends. For more extended discussions concerning the characteristics of each method, the reader is referred to the *Preliminary Survey of Methods of Teaching Reading and Writing*. It summarizes also the results of experiments concerning the relative merits of teaching reading and writing and outlines programs for teaching these subjects to both children in neglected areas of the world and to illiterate adults.

New Members, Please

If you enjoy THE READING TEACHER and find it helpful to you, please express your approval by signing up at least one new member by November fifteenth. Use coupon on p. 114.

Discussion, Writing, Dramatics—Three Aids to Good Reading

by Jeannette Veatch
School of Education, Field Division
New York University
New York City

As a classroom teacher I became convinced that reading could be aided by spontaneous classroom discussion, creative writing, and creative dramatics. I knew they had achieved wonders with my youngsters.

Some of you may remember that I held forth on this topic in The Reading Teacher of May, 1952. As you may suspect I was riding a favorite horse and at that time had no evidence of a statistical nature to back me up. I just knew it worked with my kids. Since then, however, I have completed a study which rather clearly supports this main thesis. Such discussion, writing, and dramatics do improve reading. And for the statisticians in the audience, it improves reading 9.5 months to 5.8 months at less than 1% level of significance. This means that on the basis of this study, children who were exposed to these three activities gained almost double in reading over those children not exposed to the activities, and furthermore there is one chance out of 300 that the gain was accidental.

Discussion, Writing, and Dramatics

At the risk of repeating, let me tell you just what I mean by the three activities which I have found so successful.

Spontaneous Discussion. The structure of this discussion revolves around the teacher being dispensable. She may begin as the leader but immediately proceeds to train a child who can take over the responsibilities of the chairman. Controls are given to the chairman in such a way that, once the patterns are clear, the teacher may become a member of the group with no higher status that the children.

The talking that goes on is voluntary with the children, is controlled by their chairman (with a gavel, perhaps) and does not demand that all things said must be approved by the teacher. In fact, it was found that if topics were *not* revealed before discussion started that children could more easily get on what one sixth grader called a "hot subject." The emphasis, in this activity, is on the children finding a "good idea" that they think the group will consider a "hot subject" from any source available. These sources may be newspapers, radio, T.V., magazines, and the like. The point is, that children are never *forced* to read, but may, if they so choose, sit and cogitate upon an idea they want to throw into the discussion hopper. It is this aspect of non-coercion, of great variety of sources, which seems important. A similar feature is true of all these activities.

Creative Writing. In this activity the child writes only when he is smitten with an irresistible idea. The teacher uses her artistry to help him find that idea, or to help him put it down, or to help him gain independence in such putting down, but the choice of the writing or the not writing lies with the child. When he can have an adventure on paper, he has a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction, and he wants to repeat that good feeling. Another important aspect of this activity, is that the child decides who is to see what he has written. Alvina Burrows very nicely categorizes children's writing into that which is public and that which is private. This is not to say that the teacher will not see the private writing, but it is to say that she does not *insist* upon seeing it. The writer has the sole choice in the matter.

Reading in connection with this activity comes in for its own sake when the children want to read their stories, poems, etc., to their fellows. But reading is also aided by the connection that is made in the child's mind between letters and words *of his own* and what his teacher has always designated as "reading." This private writing will usually, in the first instance, cause most teachers to grit their teeth and bear the errors. That they must do, because too early correction will destroy this tenuous connection, and forever damage the will, the drive, the desire, to write down one's heart on paper.

Creative Dramatics. Creative dramatics is that activity in which stories or incidents are developed spontaneously without the memorization of lines. Children and teacher decide upon some particular material to be used. It can be stories or incidents. This may even come from the most old-fashioned and outdated kinds of books. But the point is that nobody is *forced* to choose a specific piece of material. Everybody collaborates in the decision. The nice part of it is, once chosen, stories that may have been deadly dull when pursued diligently page by page, day by day, will suddenly come alive when voluntary actors and actresses put their hearts and souls into the action of the plot. Successive casts for the same sequence have been found to help increase the dramatic tone of the whole action to a remarkable degree. The shy child who hesitates to volunteer for a character can usually be started on his dramatic way by being a "curtain" which opens and closes on the scenes.

The Experimentation

The study which used these three activities was carried out by comparing eight pairs of equivalent classroom groups, sixteen in all. The teacher of one of each pair was trained in an in-service program to carry out the three activities just described. I did not teach the children myself. I only trained the teachers who carried on the activities from February of 1951 to June of the same year. The children were in groups whose age average was in the eleventh year, whose reading and arithmetic levels were almost equal, whose teachers were roughly equal in ability, and similar in several other factors. Approximately 600 children were in-

volved and were found in the fifth and sixth grades of one of our large eastern cities.

As the investigator, I was concerned that the activities be carried out so that they would be consistent with the above description. The comparison teachers, of course, never knew what was going on. But the experimental teachers saw me demonstrate all three activities, as well as participated in several sessions just talking about and describing the experimentation.

The teachers participated voluntarily. The reasons advanced for joining the experimentation were variously expressed as "I've got nothing to lose;" "I'm in a rut; it might help;" "I'd just like to see if anything *can* be done with this bunch of kids;" or "I've never been asked to do anything before. I guess it will be all right."

This suspicion and lethargy didn't last too long, however. Just before the last session of the training program, I had asked them to try at least *one* of the activities so they could ask more intelligent questions based on the experience. Two of the teachers walked in with what can only be described as an ecstatic expression. They had tried creative writing and simply couldn't believe what happened. Their children went, and I quote, "crazy over the stuff." As can well be imagined, this enthusiasm swept all before it, and the experimental teachers were off on an experience which came to mean a great deal to them as well as to their children.

My role during that spring term was to visit each classroom weekly to do what was needed to smooth the rough edges on the activities. While no teaching was done by me, I conferred with the teachers and helped them as needed.

It was soon obvious that something was happening. I quote teacher's comments from my notes:

"You get so much done without a special campaign."

"Why are they reading with so much more expression? I haven't said anything about it. It puzzles me."

"It (the experimental activities) motivates reading . . . they pay more attention to facts and sequence and are much more eager."

"Dramatics seems to aid in the retention of facts (in social studies.)"

"I notice they are using spelling techniques in working out words (in creative writing) . . . quite a bit by themselves."

"Spelling and English took on new meaning in creative writing which they didn't have before. Punctuation, paragraphing and letter form improved."

Other comments were made about their relief at not having to spend so much time "getting a lesson ready." Several of these teachers noted that they were busier than they had ever been before, but they seemed to spend less time "teaching." It was clear that the common practice of the extensive seat work to be copied from the blackboard and worked by the children diminished. Said one teacher, "It lasts so much longer these days."

What We Learned About Reading

These pupils were measured before they were selected and after the

experimental period for changes in four things:

1. Reading achievement
2. Arithmetic achievement
3. Emotional needs adjustment
4. Social acceptance patterns

The findings in all four areas are important, but those concerning reading achievement are of greatest significance.

It is important to note that in these classes *reading was never taught*. Reading occurred, but it was *allowed* to happen. It was not coerced, or forced, or pressured.

A question might then be asked about the "regular" reading program. These experimental activities were the only variable, that is, the only significant difference between the weekly programs of each pair of groups. The three creative activities were given a total of at least five hours each week by each experimental teacher. The groups were paired on their similarity of programs. The activities described were unknown to any of the sixteen groups before the onset of the experimental period. The "regular" reading period in both comparison and experimental classrooms was untouched, except at the discretion of the teacher.

The five hours of creative activities did cut out some things in the program. Usually it was language arts that was affected. The experimental teachers could obviously see that the experimentation was in the area of the language arts, and did not feel conscience-stricken about that kind of omission. Nevertheless, I noted that the "regular" reading program from textbooks was apt to be retained. Even though such textbook practices were still a part of the weekly program in each pair, the significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups was the three creative activities. Therefore, the gains that came can safely be said to be a result of these activities.

In conclusion, it might be of interest to know that in so far as could be ascertained, this study is one of the few that deals with creative activities and their effects. There are some scattered studies of an exploratory nature, which is not to deny their basic value, of course. But in this study the effort was made, and successfully so in one of the four areas measured, to see what happened in experimentation dealing with large numbers of children, handled in ordinary classroom groups, in situations which are similar to thousands elsewhere in the nation.

These are classroom practices which many educators feel are sound and good, but which have not been evaluated objectively before. This study presents cold scientific fact in favor of such educational practices.

New Children's Booklist

"Growing Up With Books" is an attractive little booklist of 250 of the best children's books, under subject and age grouping. The new edition is now available from R. R. Bowker Co., 63 W. 45 Street, New York. It consists of 36 pages, 3½ by 6 inches, illustrated with a bright yellow cover. Over 300,000 copies of the first edition were distributed. Prices: 25 cents in cash for 5 copies; $2.25 for 100 copies.

How Many Words Does a Child Know?

by Nancy Larrick
Education Director Children's Books
Random House, New York

As TEACHERS we are continuously stressing the size of a child's vocabulary. This practice shows up in our spelling lists, in our use of vocabulary-controlled basic readers, in our mental aptitude tests, in standardized reading tests. For example, the I.Q. test is in part a vocabulary test. Rightly or wrongly, we say that Betsy has greater mental ability, greater native wit, if she is familiar with many different words.

We take it for granted that it is good for a child to have a large vocabulary. But what is a large vocabulary for a first grader? For a fourth grader? For a college freshman? Make your wildest guess. Then try it on your next weekend visitor in need of a guessing game. My bet is that unless you have studied the more recent research, your guess will be far below the estimates shown in such research. Because we do seem to operate in a vocabulary-centered curriculum, these research findings have tremendous significance for all who are concerned with the child's language development.

Why Vocabulary Is Difficult To Measure

For many years people tried to record the language of children by writing down what they heard the child say. Such reports were full of errors and omissions because of the onrush of words that may characterize a child's spontaneous speech. Not until I tried to make such a record myself did I realize how difficult it is to record by hand the conversation of a young child. Even for the expert stenographer, he will go too fast at certain times. With the very young, there are many combinations of sounds which are not identifiable as words, many incomplete sentences, and frequently a rapidly shifting train of thought.

Now that such conversations can be recorded mechanically, we can make an accurate and complete study of a child's language. However, I have found only one piece of published research based on the mechanically recorded language of children.

But recording the words an individual uses is only part of the problem. We still have the difficulty of counting the number of different words he has used. Do we count the singular noun *ball* as one word and the plural *balls* as the same word or a different word? What about *quick* and *quickly, run* and *running, have* and *had*?

Should such nicknames and diminutives as "Quack-Quack" for *duck* be counted as a word? Should the proper names of places and persons be counted? The decisions on all of these questions have varied greatly not only among those who have tried to mea-

sure the extent of vocabulary but by those who have attempted to measure the reading difficulty of a story or book.

But even if there were agreement on these questions, the vocabulary count of a recorded conversation would not give the child's complete vocabulary. This is because it is a measure of the words needed for that particular occasion, not the measure of the words that *might have been used* if the situation had been different.

Another great difficulty in measuring vocabulary comes from the many meanings which a single word may have. In his speech a child may show that he knows *green* as a color, but does he know *green* meaning *not ripe*? In the research studies it is generally assumed that a child "knows" a word if he recognizes one meaning of the word. Yet that is not a very satisfactory ruling when we want to measure the extent of a person's vocabulary.

Ways in Which Vocabulary Has Been Measured

Five important methods of measuring vocabulary have been used:

1. *Counting the different words recorded from the conversation or speech in a "natural" situation.*

2. *Counting the different words used in the written work of an individual.* For example, in the past students have tabulated the different words used by Shakespeare in his writing, and assumed that the grand total of words written by Shakespeare made up his total vocabulary. By this time, we are ready to agree that Shakespeare probably knew thousands of words, or even hundreds of thousands, not recorded in his written work.

3. *Counting the different words listed by children in a "free-association" test.* This means asking children to list any or all words that come to mind and then counting the number of words so listed.

4. *Counting the different words listed by children in a stimulus-response test.* This means asking children to list all words suggested by a picture or some such general topic as home, school, farm, or store.

5. *Estimating the extent of vocabulary from the number of words recognized on a selected list.* This involves two big questions: (a) How do we test recognition? and (b) How do we select the list of words for the test? A survey of the literature shows that there has been rather general agreement on the former and violent disagreement on the latter.

Seashore and Eckerson devised a Vocabulary Recognition Test which combines the most commonly used tests of word recognition: multiple-choice and writing out definitions. Others have used similar devices.

With young children who can neither read nor write, this and similar word recognition tests are given orally with the examiner recording the child's definition or use in a sentence. Older children can write their own answers.

Choosing the Sample of Words

The real debate has arisen over the selection of a list of words for such a test. For many years research studies have been made using a scientific

sampling of words taken from a dictionary list. On this general principle there seems to be little controversy. The fighting breaks out over the size of the dictionary to be used. Should it be a dictionary of 18,000 words such as Terman and Childs used in 1912? At the time of their study, scholars seemed to agree that a child couldn't possibly have a vocabulary as large as 18,000 words so a sampling from such a list would be adequate.

Some years later, Gillette tested himself with the same list and estimated his vocabulary to be 16,833 words. Then he tested himself with a sampling of words from a dictionary of 209,000 words. When he used this larger list, the size of his estimated vocabulary was 127,888 words. The contrast was so marked that scholars quickly realized there must be some relation between the size of the word list from which the sample was taken and the size of the estimated vocabulary. In the thirties, a number of studies were made using samplings from dictionaries of 100,000 to 450,000 words with college students and adults.

Seashore and Eckerson worked out a word recognition test based on a dictionary of 371,000 words. They tried this on college freshmen and sophomores and found the estimated vocabulary of the average student in the group was 155,736.

It is interesting to note that none of the tests based on a large dictionary sample was used with children until 1941. Then Mary Katherine Smith used the Seashore-Eckerson test on public school children in a farm village, a middle class suburban city, and a mixed rural-suburban village. Her findings indicated that the vocabulary of children in the grades had been grossly underestimated. Note the contrast in the following estimates for Grade 7 (12-year-olds.)

Terman & Childs ..	1912	18,000	7,200
Kirkpatrick	1907	28,000	10,666
Smith, M. K.	1941	371,000	55,000

Smith's study included children from each of the twelve grades. She estimated that first graders have a vocabulary of 24,000 words, roughly 17,000 basic words and 7,000 derived words.

In 1925 and 1926, records had been made of the language of two groups of six-year-olds. Both of these indicated that a first grader probably had a vocabulary of 2,500 words. In 1936, E. W. Dolch published an article in which he estimated the average first grader's vocabulary at 2,703 words.

Mary Katherine Smith's estimate of 24,000 words for a first grader's vocabulary was almost ten times as big as any earlier estimates for the same grade.

Then the fireworks began. Papers were read, articles were written, letters were sent to the editor, cross examinations were set up at several of the professional meetings. Seashore and Mary Katherine Smith were the targets for most of the criticism.

Then Hartmann published his findings of several years earlier and made the statement that Seashore's estimate for the vocabulary of college undergraduates was "fantastically low." Using a sample from a larger dictionary than Seashore and Eckerson had used, Hartmann estimated that the average college student had a vocabulary

100,000 words greater than Seashore had estimated.

Although Hartmann's figures were much higher than Seashore's for college students, there seems to have been little discussion or debate about these estimates of vocabulary size. The debate centered about Mary Katherine Smith's figures for the vocabulary of elementary and high school children. As late as November, 1949, *Elementary English* carried a detailed criticism of Smith's figures by Dr. Dolch and a documented refutation by Dr. Seashore. In his statement, Dr. Seashore explained that Smith's figures should not be considered national norms since they had been determined by tests in only three schools. He also pointed out that the figures for the various grades had been arrived at by testing different children in these grades although it might have been more accurate to test the same children as they moved from grade to grade through the years.

Substantiating Evidence

Since the Smith report in 1941, a number of scholars have used the test-by-sample technique in an attempt to estimate the vocabularies of children. All of these have produced estimates much larger than those based on the smaller dictionary or those of the earlier record-and-count technique.

The Seashore-Eckerson test, used by M. K. Smith, was also used by Schulman and Havighurst in 1947 and by Cynthia Colvin in 1951. Their findings can be compared to Smith's findings as follows:

Schulman	9th	38,930	37,900
Schulman	10th	41,400	43,100
Colvin	7th	33,461	35,000

Of the three new estimates given, one is greater than Smith's, two are roughly 2,000 words less. But all three are very close to the Smith figures, so close as to substantiate the general size of children's vocabulary as estimated by Smith.

Summary of Research

A survey of the research in this field warrants certain significant conclusions:

1. Vocabulary estimates which are based on a sampling from an unabridged dictionary are much larger than those based on a sampling from an abridged dictionary.

2. Repeated tests with college undergraduates and adults show that their estimated vocabulary is certainly over 100,000 words, probably over 200,000 words.

3. It would be expected that such vocabulary growth would be gradual through the years of the individual's growth. Certainly if a college sophomore, probably aged 20, has a vocabulary of roughly 155,000 words (Seashore and Eckerson, 1940), it seems hard to believe that he could have known only some 7,200 words as a seventh grader just eight years earlier as Terman and Childs estimated.

4. The findings of Schulman and Havighurst with ninth and tenth graders and of Colvin with seventh graders approximate those of Smith within a range of 2,000 words. This seems to substantiate Smith's estimates.

What Does This Mean for Classroom Teachers?

In our eagerness to have children

master the 18 words in the pre-primer or even the 258 words in a more advanced reader, it is easy to forget the tremendous number of words that a child can identify by ear at least.

There was a day when a child was introduced to new words only through the language he met in his home, school and community. Often that was a very limited number of words. But today he is hearing the language of radio and television as well. Mars, Jupiter and Saturn are familiar place names for he is surely hearing these "space terms." Formosa and Panmunjom, Syngman Rhee and Malenkov are heard almost daily. It seems likely, then, that the average child's vocabulary is far larger today than it was ten or fifteen years ago. Because most children are regular TV followers, it is possible that their vocabulary may be richer in certain areas than that of their teacher who has no TV set and seldom watches a TV program.

In the light of this situation, there are certain questions that we may well ask ourselves as we try to work out a rich language program in the classroom:

1. Are we making the most of the child's very extensive acquaintance with words—through a rich variety of reading materials, through his own creative use of language both oral and written, and through a broad expanse of subject matter?

2. Are we giving children a chance to use the vocabulary they have acquired outside of the classroom—a vocabulary that is pertinent to the child because he has learned it through some exciting experience or some entertainment such as a TV show?

3. Are we keeping our own vocabulary ahead of, or even up to, the child's growing acquaintance with words so that we can help to create a classroom experience that is rich and vivid and stimulating?

These are questions which have no pat answers, of course. But they warrant coming back to if we are to make the most of what we know about the vocabulary of children.

New Children's Book Clubs

Within the past year at least three new children's book clubs have sprung up. All report splendid results of their membership drives.

Young Readers of America, Inc., a junior division of the Book-of-the-Month Club, 345 Hudson St., New York, claims more than 100,000 members. Each month a subscribing member receives one of the Landmark Books, children's American history books published by Random House. Books sell at retail price ($1.50) plus postage.

My Weekly Reader Book Club was launched this fall by American Education Publications, publishers of *My Weekly Reader,* and Charles E. Merrill Co., 400 S. Front St., Columbus, Ohio. The plan calls for the purchase of five books during the school year with a free book dividend in addition.

Parents' Magazine's Book Club for Children was launched in September. Books of all kinds from many publishers will be offered at the uniform price of $1.47. For information write Parents' Magazine, 52 Vanderbilt Ave., New York.

Today's Boys Can and Do Read—Reports Boys' Club Leader

by Iris Vinton
Director, Publications Service
and Chairman, National Library Committee
Boys' Clubs of America

EIGHT YEARS' working with boys and books and an analysis of some 30,000 or more individual opinions on books from members of Boys' Clubs over the country have convinced me that boys can and do read and that they know in general what they like to read.

For eight years Boys' Clubs of America has conducted a national reading program. However, since the 1860's when Boys' Clubs were first established in New England towns, the library has been a part of the overall program of each Club. A national program was set up within recent years in order to stimulate the interest in books and reading among boys who, outside the school, lacked opportunities for reading experiences.

Participation in reading was encouraged and promoted in much the same way as participation in athletics, games, other physical activities, and in crafts and hobbies—it is something to enjoy each day; it's fun. Especially in reading, boys, from as young as seven to as old as seventeen, needed the assurance of taking part in an activity which boys everywhere thought was important and about which there was considerable fanfare on their own level.

Breakfast cereal never became popular with the small fry until the adult it's-good-for-you theme was abandoned and everyone began plugging it as something to eat and be a second Joe DiMaggio, or words to that effect. A young fellow can understand what it's all about and at the same time get pretty excited about tucking into breakfast.

By making reading important on the boy's own level, Boys' Club people encouraged friendly relations between boys and books. The establishment of such friendly relations is basic to voluntary reading. The majority of youngsters in the Clubs are not avid readers; they are not even habitual readers. In this respect they are probably no different from the youngsters who do not happen to belong to Boys' Clubs.

Boys particularly may have actual feelings of hostility toward books for any number of reasons. We have found some of the more important to be:

(1) Non-acceptance by the group of reading as an activity. The reader is "different." He fears he may be rejected by the group.

(2) Unfamiliarity with books in free association. Books are strangers or at best nodding acquaintances. He meets them in school to learn and when he goes to the public library to

"look up something," or to "take out" a reading assignment. There is no real home library because of economic or other reasons. He doesn't have the money to buy his own books so he acquires no feeling of possession about them. And he seldom considers a book as important to "save up for" as, for instance, a baseball bat or glove. The social atmosphere in which he lives places primary emphasis upon physical activities and spectatorship in his free time, so he seldom has a chance to develop the capacity to enjoy reading experiences.

(3) Lack of reading skill makes him feel insecure. He becomes aggressively defensive and remarks, "Don't like books," "Reading's boring," "Too much like school," "I like comic books better," or something similar.

More Readers in Boys' Clubs

In spite of the negative attitude toward reading which most boys had acquired apparently by the time they were of reading age, there are an increasing number of readers in Boys' Clubs. Figures over the past eight years show that not only are more Boys' Clubs carrying on a long-range reading program, but also that the numbers of boys in the various Clubs who participate in the program are increasing.

It must be remembered that all these boys are voluntary readers. They may be encouraged and skillfully guided into reading by their librarians and advisors, but the boy reads because he chooses to read, because he himself wants to read. As one boy aged twelve said, "I got a charge out of this. First book I ever read." He certainly did not mean it was the first book he had ever read, but it was the first book he had read on his own, of his own free choice, and he had a real feeling of accomplishment. He went on to read more books.

Another fact which supports the statement that more boys are reading, and perhaps even more boys are reading more books, is that Clubs are reporting greater use of the Club library, in some cases even greater use of a nearby public library. In a recent comparison of attendance figures for the various activities in Boys' Clubs, such as games room, gymnasium, craft shops, etc., it was found that in a number of instances (not too many it is true, but sufficient to show what can be done if interest is skillfully promoted) the library attendance equaled that of the gymnasium and participation in reading and other library activities was almost as high as in athletics.

Boys' Club people have found that it is the skillful promotion of interest in any worthwhile activity at boy's level that results in participation in the first place, and then develops in increased and continued enjoyable participation in that activity—whether it be swimming or reading books.

It takes the same amount of effort by a skilled, trained instructor to get a group of boys deeply interested in becoming good swimmers who really like to swim as it does to interest a group of boys in being good readers who have a deep sense of satisfaction in reading. A factor that has a very definite bearing on this, however, is

that the skilled, trained advisor in reading who knows how to work with boys is much harder to find than the right kind of swimming instructor.

More "Young Appeal" Books

Today many more books are available on concept and interest levels which are on a par with the comprehension and intelligence levels of the various aged boys, but have been carefully and thoughtfully geared to their reading skills and speech patterns. The availability of these attractive, "young-appeal" books has increased readership among boys who feel as insecure in the book field as they do, for example, as beginners in basketball. The beginner of twelve may know just about everything there is to know about basketball, but his skill is limited. Similarly, he may know a great many things and is perhaps highly intelligent, but his skill in handling the symbols of printed communication is about equal to his skill in manipulating the basketball. Interest increases with increased skill. If practice methods keep pace with his ability to perform so that he continues to have a feeling of accomplishment, he wants to keep trying something a little harder. The gaining of skill is fun in itself.

The kinds of trade books and newer teaching methods have been changing the development of reading skill from a rather painful experience to a pleasurable one. About a third of the Boys' Club readers from 8 to 13 who reported on books this past year stated that one of the reasons they liked the book was that it was easy to read. If the book did not come up to what they considered the level of their intelligence, however, they were all quick to comment, "too childish" or "must be for younger kids," no matter what the reading skill level. They showed an astonishing ability to measure their own skill in reading and capacity to understand, and to be forthright about them.

There is little in the foregoing that applies to the relatively small number of boys who, as though they had been born with books in their hands and a magic key to words, read almost anything any time. These boys are confident readers. Each time a new book comes into the library, they're on the reception committee. Words are not barriers; they are bridges to all sorts of exciting experiences. These boys are a long way from being the bookworms (commonly called "sissies") of yesteryear; rather they are those boys who show greater capacity for growing as a whole personality than other boys. Their interests and activities range from doing pull-ups and broadjumping in the gym to playing chess or acting in a play.

These boys need guidance among the greats in literature and among the best books, old and new, fact and fiction.

We have found, however, that the majority of boys must be guided into taking the first independent steps in reading, into walking, then into running. When they begin to walk, they form the habit of reading. Then they will make some general comments on books, such as this from a thirteen-year-old trampoline champ, "They (books he'd read) have given me hours of fun-coated education."

Visual Aids Can Help Develop Independence in Reading

by Lenora Logan
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MANY VISUAL aids are being used successfully to help the young reader develop independence in reading. This practice becomes particularly important as children move from the gradual pace of the primary grades to the more rapid pace and more diversified program of the intermediate grades.

By using visual aids, the teacher can improve and enrich the child's learning experiences and thus encourage him to seek information, to select and reject materials, and read critically.

The Opaque Projector

Teachers are finding the opaque projector a valuable tool for reading readiness in the primary grades or with the slow learners. Materials for projection should be easily accessible and in order. The best results are achieved when illustrations covering a topic are arranged as a unit with a definite sequence. This may be done in several ways. You may stack your mounted pictures or words in the order in which they are to be shown. You may also mount the pictures, words or story on uniform 8 x 8 cards, and then hinge the cards back and forth in accordion style, so you may have a useful arrangement of your materials.

Another plan is to fasten your pictures, words, sentences or stories, evenly spaced, on a long strip of shelf or wrapping paper. This strip is inserted in the projector and moved sideways from picture to picture.

A wide variety of reading material from the reading-readiness through the intermediate grades can be prepared in this manner. When this printed material is projected and the child recognizes his own name on the screen, he becomes interested and wants to learn what the other words say. Directions printed in manuscript may be projected, as, "Good morning, Jim!" "John, open the door!" "Mary, bring me your book!"

A page from a pre-primer or primer may be thrown on the screen and the group read it together. The child who is shy, timid, or slow, experiences success by reading with the group. He enjoys hearing his own voice speaking the words correctly. This gives him courage to try too.

Familiar pictures with key words may be projected to encourage children to tell the story of the picture. These stories may be written on the board and then prepared for screening during the reading period. Reading their own stories from the screen creates and stimulates interest. This

The writer wishes to express appreciation to the members of the Kent Chapter of the I.C.I.R.I. for their assistance in providing ideas and materials for this article.

story, written in his own words, becomes a rich experience for the child. He can read it. The child has a desire to learn the words and to read them so he can participate with the group. The attention of the group is upon the screen and not upon the child who is reading.

The Felt or Flannel Board

The felt or flannel board has numerous possibilities as an aid to independent reading.

To develop the ability to observe likenesses and differences, you may arrange a row of animals or objects, all alike except one, on the felt board. A child will select the one that is different, remove it and see that the remaining ones are all alike. The child may rearrange the objects and choose someone to find the one that is different. The difference may be in size, shape, color or activity. The child should recognize and tell how they are different, as: "This is different because it is bigger" or "This one is different because it is red."

To present words with the same initial sounds, arrange a number of objects beginning with the *d* sound on the board, plus one or two joker words. Ask the child to come to the board and remove all the articles that start like *dog* and *doll,* saying each one as he removes it. A number of objects with which he is familiar should be presented first so the child may experience success, and so gain independence and a feeling of accomplishment.

The felt board may be used to help the child tell his own story or retell one he has heard. He will need pictures of the main characters and any furniture, trees, or properties important in the story. These are put upon the board and removed as the action is recounted. Frequently a series of children will tell the events of the story chapter by chapter, moving the characters about on the felt-board "stage." This encourages independent reading in each child since he wants to know the story well enough to re-tell it and have the experience of placing the characters on the board.

Filmstrips and Reading

Since it is not possible to bring children into contact with all the wonders of the world, the filmstrip fills a great gap. For example, the group may have first-hand experiences with classroom pets which they wish to learn more about. A good filmstrip may help develop new concepts and encourage spontaneous discussion and new vocabulary development. It may be used as a developmental lesson or as supplementary reading.

Today several book companies have included filmstrips as a part of their basal reading programs. The Row-Peterson Textfilms in Reading and the filmstrips for the Alice and Jerry Basic Readers use black and white pictures and text to present authentic materials to correlate with various units of the readers. Some of the films contain reading text that may be used in place of the basic readers. Some advantages of the Textfilms are:

1. When using a Textfilm, all children in the group are receiving the same sense impressions at the same

time. They all begin their learning from the same data.

2. The projected image centers and holds the attention of the entire group more effectively than can be done when pupils are looking at pages in individual books.

3. Learning with the film starts with pictured objects and situations, rather than with words; the children begin learning in terms of actual or vicarious experience, rather than with words, which are only symbols of reality.

4. Each frame of a Textfilm is a learning situation in which children participate, as a group and as individuals, sharing experiences.

5. The skills taught in the basic reading period can be enriched, extended, and reinforced through the use of the Textfilms.[1]

Using These Materials

I have mentioned only a few of the visual aids useful in the teaching of reading. There are dozens of others —posters and shelfpaper "movies," classroom signs and labels, illustrated experience charts and books, puppets and movies. And of course since the first little red school house, the blackboard has been used as a visual aid.

As with all other aids, these must be used thoughtfully and creatively to encourage the faltering ones, to give color and drama to the apathetic ones, to give confidence and joy to all.

1. "The Textfilm Story." *Society for Visual Aids,* Chicago, Illinois.

What Is Skimming? What Are Its Uses At Different Grade Levels?

by Helen S. Grayum
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NOT ONLY are most adults intrigued by the process of reading; they are genuinely interested in improving their own techniques. With students and businessmen, lawyers and homemakers, farmers and tradesmen, clerks and scientists, the response is the same. There is more reading to be done, they say, than they can possibly cover—reading that is a part of keeping up-to-date with the everyday tasks at hand. They often feel a personal shortcoming, and wish they could command greater skill. This was one of the most striking observations noted in a recent exploratory study made in reading.

The types of reading ability needed today are many, just as the purposes of reading are many. In the past, the teaching of reading has generally emphasized development of a detailed and meticulous approach, although some authorities have long favored different procedures when reading for different purposes. Some purposes, these authorities point out, require careful study of individual words and word relationships, and time for reflection, while others are adequately achieved by comprehension of the main ideas. Ability in reading for one purpose does not, however, assure equal ability for another. Reading which is slow and laborious does not necessarily indicate ability for any purpose, although it has often been associated with "careful" and therefore "good" reading.

The reader's attitude toward rate, often instilled early in reading experiences, is a potent factor—it can permit or prevent development of variety in reading rate. The reader may, on the one hand, recognize the need for an increased rate sometimes, yet refrain from attempting to read faster because he feels that to read faster is to read less carefully.

Although reference to skimming has been made off and on for the past fifty years, little information about skimming and how to teach it is found in professional literature. Therefore, an exploratory study to discover the nature of skimming, its purpose and place as an ability in reading, was needed.

A Study of Skimming

Twenty-five students in each of six groups took part in the study. The six groups were fourth graders, seventh graders, tenth graders, college freshmen, graduate students and widely-read adults. All had intelligence and reading ability that were average or above.

This article is based on Dr. Grayum's Doctoral Dissertation completed at Indiana University in 1952.

A readably-written selection of social studies content, generally not unfamiliar, with a comparatively light concept load was chosen for each of the six levels. Each person was asked to skim the selection according to his best knowledge and ability. Observations were recorded by code and supplemented by eye-movement photographs.

Afterward each student took two tests, one on general ideas, and the other on details. As the criterion of skimming ability for this investigation, a time unit score was obtained by dividing the subject's combined scores on the two tests by the time required for reading.

The next step was to make an intensive study of the five people in each group who had the highest scores, called "The Goods," and the five in each group with the lowest scores, "The Poors." An analysis was made of their comprehension test scores and of their reading techniques as revealed by observation and eye-movement photographs. They were also interviewed to discover their attitudes toward reading, and to check with them the observations recorded. Conferences were held with expert teachers on various levels, and classroom observations supplemented findings of the study by adding information on points of view and practices in the teaching of skimming.

What We Learned About Skimming

Results of the study showed marked differences among individuals in the same age-grade level, even though all were average or above in intelligence and in general reading ability. Persons rating superior skimming ability used many more techniques, as shown by flexibility (of rate) and originality, than did those whose scores were near the bottom of the scale.

For example, one college freshman representing the Goods, had a reading rate ranging from 600 to 1380 words per minute with 84% comprehension of general ideas and 60% of the details. In that part of the selection read most slowly every line was covered with two or three fixations per line, while in the part read most rapidly there were five sweeps across the card of 12 lines, with one or two fixations per "line" across the card as shown by the photographs.

Another freshman, representing the Poors, showed a range of 175 to 240 words per minute, and scored 42% comprehension of general ideas and 70% of the details. In the portion read most slowly the subject covered every line, rereading three lines of the 12 and regressing many times. Even in the part read most rapidly every line was covered. For the entire selection this person's average number of words per fixation was 1, in contrast to 2.65 words per fixation averaged by the freshman cited above.

A relationship was shown between the scores of skimming ability and standardized test scores of intelligence and reading, but with marked exceptions. A high total score on a standardized reading test did not assure the ability to skim. For example, one college freshman with a psychological rating (percentile) of 85 and a reading rating of 85 required 21 minutes for reading the selection, with an

average rate of 198 words per minute, and 51% correct on the combined tests. Another college freshman with a psychological rating of 77 and a reading rating of 82 required 5.8 minutes for reading the selection, with an average rate of 72.3 words per minute, and 73% correct on the combined tests.

The smallest differences in rate and the greatest in comprehension were found in the fourth grade group, with the seventh grade group next. At these levels ability to comprehend and evaluate ideas was a greater determining factor in skimming ability than was rate of reading. In the adult group circumstances were reversed.

Techniques observed in skimming included skipping in various degrees, marked changes in rate, pausing, regressing, looking back, and looking ahead. The last-named was used infrequently, however. All were observed at all levels. Mastery of certain fundamentals of reading—mechanics, vocabulary, comprehension and thinking—appeared to be necessary for efficient skimming. In addition those classified as the Goods showed excellent judgment in adjusting reading rate according to the content (although there was great variation in rate of reading specific portions of the selection), and showed persistence in adhering to the immediate purposes of reading. Those classified as the Poors, on the other hand, were more inclined to read everything at the same rate, or showed less wisdom in the discrimination of ideas for the immediate reading purposes.

The study showed that response to the content was a highly individual matter; minute personal reactions were reflected in the reading pattern. Skillful skimming might be called a form of rapid reading but implies, the study indicated, advanced or higher-level techniques.

In Conclusion

Concepts of skimming, referred to near the beginning of this report, may be grouped into four broad categories, according to the purpose for which the ability is used. The chief purposes of skimming at certain grade levels recommended in thirty representative courses of study, listed in order of frequency of mention, were:

1. To find specific information—stressed on primary and intermediate levels, but not at senior high school level.

2. To find pertinent information in a certain book or article—emphasized at all levels but proportionately more in senior high school.

3. To find general ideas—also emphasized at all levels, but proportionately more in senior high school.

4. To locate information, such as appropriate books and articles—stressed at all levels.

The value of skimming to get a general picture before reading for details was pointed out by teachers at all levels except the primary.

There is need for a more comprehensive view of the meaning of skimming. Greater understanding of its nature and techniques, as well as of its uses, would aid teachers in developing this ability more effectively in their students. Interviews accompanying this study revealed that a teacher's own ability to skim appeared to

influence the encouragement of this skill. Furthermore, an abundance of suitable reading material at hand is probably an important provision.

The foundation for this ability should be laid when the child is learning to read, and guidance in its development continued judiciously throughout his school career as a part of the whole reading program. Students should be taught how to determine candidly their own purpose of reading, how procedure may vary according to purpose and background of information, and the significance, in time and satisfaction, of using the reading procedure best suited for a particular purpose.

Of prime importance in developing the ability to skim is establishing the purpose, evaluating the importance of ideas in terms of the purpose, developing flexibility of rate, and encouraging individual techniques which accomplish clearly the purpose for reading. For there must be not only conviction but determination in order, or as one seventh grader put it, "to get the most meaning from the fewest words."

Children and Their Reading As Seen by a Bookmobile Librarian

by Ruth Warncke
Librarian, Kent County Library
Grand Rapids, Michigan

(The Kent County Library serves both rural and urban communities, with twelve small branches, and three bookmobiles. The staff of the County Library sees daily evidence that given an opportunity, children read in spite of modern distractions.)

THE MENDING room at the County Library is piled high with books—worn, dirty, torn, and tired. The menders work against time as the librarians say hopefully, "How are you coming? We need those books desperately."

Most of these are children's books. They have been read to a frazzle by boys and girls who live in urban as well as rural areas. Many of them have bicycles and pets and other distractions. Their families have cars and radios and television sets. But the children read.

Here is the 1952 record for Harris Creek School, a one-room rural school with 28 students. Thirty-two books to supplement the inadequate school collection were left by the County Library bookmobile on each of five visits, making a total of 160 books available, none of which stayed in the school longer than six weeks. The total circulation of these books was 1108. On an average, each child read 39 books during the school year.

Among the books for primary readers were *Foxie* by Ingri D'Aulaire, *Winter Noisy Book* by Margaret Wise Brown, *Bartholomew and the Oobleck* by Dr. Seuss, *Summer Is Here* by Bertha Morris Parker, *Small Rain* by Jessie Orton Jones and *Autumn Harvest* by Alvin Tresselt. For older boys and girls, there were *Bill and His Neighbors* by Lois Fisher, *Swamp Fox* by Marion M. Brown, *Wild Wild West* by James Daugherty, *Big Book of Indians* by Sydney E. Fletcher, *Mountain Girl* by Genevieve Fox, *Henry Clay* by Helen Monsell, and *Garden We Planted Together* by the U.N. Secretariat.

These books were not imposed on the children. Each child chose one book from the collection of 1500 on the bookmobile to add to his room's collection. He was free to make his own choice. A professionally trained librarian stood by to give guidance if the child wanted a certain type of material or was uncertain whether the book he had chosen met his needs.

Books Must Be Available

The reasons behind any child's choice of a book, or his willingness to read, are complex.

What motivated the child who took the book on human relations, *Bill and His Neighbors?* Was he concerned about building understanding between people? The most idealistic of us will

doubt that. Could the cartoon illustrations have intrigued him? Did the print and vocabulary convince him that he could read this book himself?

Whatever the reasons which motivate a child to choose a book, it is a categorical imperative that he cannot choose it if it is not there. Children to whom no books are available do not read. Availability is the constant factor in children's reading. Books to a certain extent supply their own motivation. Simply by being present they ask to be read.

How much material is available has a bearing on a child's reading, too. In a minimum collection, determined by need rather than numbers, the doors to reading satisfaction are opened only a little way. A child may find something in each subject field (providing his tastes conform somewhat to general patterns), but his free ranging curiosity will be stopped by the numerical limitation of the books on his subject and within his reading scope.

Encouragement at School

Encouragement to read has many aspects, few of them exhortatory. In a certain one-room rural school, preparations for the visit of the bookmobile are made far in advance. Teacher and pupils discuss the books which they have had for this period. They make a list of questions to ask the bookmobile librarian. Are there any more books about Homer Price? Is the snake book by Zim the best one, or should they see another before they buy one for their room collection? Is there a biography which tells more about the Wright brothers than this one by Stevenson?

Volunteers prepare a surprise for the bookmobile librarian. Claire draws a picture of the largest and brightest snake in the Zim book. Carl writes a tall tale of his own invention after deep immersion in Paul Bunyan. The beginners and first graders plan with the teacher to play "Round the Mulberry Bush" from *Singing Games* on bookmobile day.

In this school the teacher reads aloud as a matter of course in the morning and just before closing time. If extra time offers at any part of the day, more reading is done. The reading corner is attractive and comfortable. In it are the books of the small basic collection belonging to the school, the County Library books, the books borrowed from a branch library by the teacher every two weeks, and books belonging to individual children and proudly lent to the school.

The dictionary and encyclopedia, neither as new as they should be, are in constant use. Selected issues of current magazines, such as *Life*, are on hand for reference. The bulletin board carries clippings from the newspaper. Everywhere is evidence that reading is useful, thoroughly approved and pleasant. In a room like this, encouragement permeates the air and stirs the least likely to read.

The Home Situation

In many otherwise good homes, hardly a handful of books is provided for the children. In some homes where everything from orange juice to ballet shoes is selected with utmost care, children's books are picked up at random in the super market with

no inquiry as to their value or suitability. Comic books are not silently tolerated during the inevitable phase, they are purchased by parents and suggested as a sedative to the child when his noise becomes troublesome. Certain comics are loudly defended by parents who eagerly teach the child taste in dress, but accept the mediocre, the garish, and the offensive in books as good enough.

Unless he lives in a large urban area, or near a good consolidated school, the child may find little opportunity to repair the omissions of his home. Hard as it is to believe, high schools exist with no libraries at all. Some are satisfied with a book budget of $100 a year and the library services of a teacher during two free periods a week. The less said about the library situation in many elementary schools the better.

How to Discourage Reading

The skills developed by parents and teachers in discouraging children's reading are phenomenal. They grant that in activities such as walking, driving a car or swimming, some children will learn earlier than others, and some will develop greater skill. But they demand that all children learn to read at the age of six and progress a measurable distance each year. Those who do not are labeled and subjected to "remedial reading."

There are teachers who assign books to be read without motivation and without preparation. They demand reports, and read, untouched by the pity of it, the desperate, often dishonest, documentations of frustrating reading experiences. They make the world of books look menacing or useless or stuffy or worst of all, out-dated —something that no thoroughly alive person would any longer be bothered with.

Added to the lack of encouragement which young people experience is the example which many adults set. By limiting their own reading to newspapers and magazines they indicate their indifference to literature as an art, philosophy as a way of life, poetry as an affirmation, or history as a guide. By acquiring information from quiz programs, over the backyard fence, from digest magazines and advertising copy they disclaim faith in scholarship, research and documentation.

In Spite of It All

But in spite of it all, children read! They catch the spark of encouragement that exists in a routine class visit to the public library, and they come back. If they have no books at home or at school or in a library (and there are thousands of children in this predicament), they read the family magazines and all the comics on the stands whenever they get a chance.

Faith in that vital center of a child's being which causes him to respond to the printed word keeps librarians and teachers out in front in the battle for books for our boys and girls. Some people quarrel about where the books shall be—in the classroom, in the school library or in the public library. Of course they should be everywhere. No real teacher can teach or live in a room without books. Neither can she get along without the reservoir which the

school library provides.

The mechanics of reading are the responsibility of the school, but the development of the child's skill, enjoyment and use of reading is a cooperative project. The librarian in the school selects and organizes the material so that at every stage of his reading development the child has books on which to practice his skill and books which challenge him to develop a greater vocabulary and greater comprehension. The public librarian, on hand when the child is not in school, is concerned with helping the child to become a more skillful reader even though he comes to the public library with no thought of school in his head. She helps him to select books which enlarge his experience, stir his imagination, appeal to his latent sense of style and rhythm. The two efforts are cooperative, not mutually exclusive.

The county librarian sees many aspects of the child's relationships to books. Children and their parents come to community bookmobile stops and into branches. Children and their teachers come to the bookmobile when it stops at schools. The librarian discusses books and reading with parents and teachers at PTA meetings, church groups, farm organizations or wherever people are gathered. He visits school libraries in action.

Every contact proves that barring physical and psychological handicaps children develop as readers when the adults who influence them set an example, offer encouragement and provide them with a wide choice of good books. The county librarian knows that everyone who deals with a child can help him to become an eager, skillful reader. It is a gift any fairy godmother would be proud to bestow, and one for which any adult will praise the generation in which he was born.

Who Says "Children Aren't Reading"?

For those who say "Children aren't reading nowadays" there are significant figures from the children's book publishing industry itself.

In the past five years the sale of children's books has almost doubled. Roughly 1,100 new children's books were brought out in 1952 as contrasted with 532 titles in 1935. The 1953 total will be closer to 1,500.

Title for title, the big name juvenile authors do better than the adult authors, selling more copies over a longer period. Walter Farley's eight *Black Stallion* books have sold an average of 100,000 copies each. The *Babar* books have sold over a million copies.

And when we look at the sales reports on some of the 25c books we find even more staggering figures. In the past twelve years the Little Golden Books are said to have sold over 220,000 copies. And the Ding-Dong School Books by Dr. Frances Horwich had sold three million copies even before the publication date.

Those who say "Children aren't reading nowadays" had better look to the financial statements of the book publishers and take a second thought.

What Research Says About the Teaching of Reading

Reviewed by Muriel Potter
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Clinical Studies in Reading II. Edited by Helen M. Robinson. Supplementary Educational Monograph #77. January 1953. University of Chicago Press

A number of interesting articles are to be found in this volume. Some of those dealing with research planned to answer questions often asked by teachers are reviewed here.

"Visual Efficiency and Progress in Learning to Read" by Helen M. Robinson and Charles B. Huelsman, Jr.

A summary of research investigations, old and new, already carried out in this subject shows that a clear-cut relationship between visual efficiency and early reading success has not as yet been found. Dr. Robinson and Dr. Huelsman planned and carried on a study whose purposes were

1. to identify from earlier investigations the visual characteristics which have been found associated with reading success or disability;

2. to obtain the judgment of specialists in vision who would suggest additional characteristics to this test;

3. to examine the vision screening tests now being used with children, to determine what vision difficulties the tests are intended to uncover;

4. to make a battery of vision screening tests, using both effective ones already in use, and adding others, until all the visual difficulties known to be associated with poor reading would be uncovered if present; and

5. to select tests suitable for appraising reading ability and intelligence, which could be used in conjunction with the battery of vision tests.

The subjects were three groups, each of between 50 and 60 children in Grades I, IV and VII in the Laboratory Schools of the University of Chicago.

Twenty visual characteristics — some very familiar to the teacher, others less frequently discussed—were studied by means of eighteen different vision tests. A few of these had been especially developed for the investigation. The first grade children were not given all the tests of this battery and the results are reported not comparable to the results for the older children. One of the striking findings for this group was the unusually large number of children who responded to the vision tests in such a way as to appear to need a professional examination of their vision.

In the group of 57 first graders, the results of The Massachusetts Vision Test showed 28 making records suggesting the need of professional examination of their vision. When the same children were tested with the Eames battery, 25 children appeared to need such an examination. Tested again with the Keystone battery, only

twelve children scored within the *pass* and doubtful range, while 45 of them failed one test or more.

These results suggest not only that the Keystone battery is likely to send a larger proportion of first grade children for eye examination than the other batteries, but also one of the following conclusions: either our first graders see poorly as a group, or that the batteries used are measuring aspects of vision not important for reading.

Four factors shown by this study to be important for good reading at first grade level are acuity, depth, accommodation and binocular reading. It is also suggested that special attention be given to hand-eye coordination, eye preference and lateral phoria (the tendency of the eyes to turn in, out, up, or down when fusion is destroyed). A later study, however, indicates that eye preference may not be very important.

In general, the performance of the first grade children on these eye tests was below the standard set for all children. Their tendency on the tests was to have lowered acuity, and to overconverge at near distance. Perhaps a separate set of standards is needed for these school beginners, the authors say. They believe that the standards for referring first graders to a refractionist need careful appraisal.

The results of the tests given to the fourth and seventh graders suggested additional lines of research, and some tentative conclusions; among them are these:

That certain visual abilities such as depth perception, relative phoria and convergence, continue to improve through growth or learning between fourth and seventh grade, and that these abilities need further study;

That eye preference is probably not related to other aspects of vision;

That a test of binocular function developed especially for these studies was the only test of its kind to distinguish between the high achiever and low achiever groups. Tests of this function found in commercial batteries did not make the same distinction between the two groups.

The authors report further tests in progress, with larger groups of children in a public school population.

"Eye-Hand Preference, Reversals and Reading Progress" by Lillian P. Stevenson and Helen M. Robinson

Tests of eye and hand preference were given to the same group of children in the Laboratory Schools of the University of Chicago three times at intervals—in kindergarten, at the end of first grade and at the end of second grade. One test was developed to identify reversal tendencies, another to determine directional preference. The visual and motor sections of the Monroe Reading Aptitude Test were used.

Of 77 children tested at kindergarten level, the hand and eye preferences were these: 38 preferred the right hand and eye consistently, 23 preferred the right hand and the left eye, and the others showed various mixed preferences. The three groups were compared for intelligence, the number of reversals made, and scores on the Monroe Aptitude Test. No significant difference on any of these tests was found.

However, when the children were required to place a series of pictures in a sequence, the right-hand-left-eye group responded differently from the other two. The right-hand-right-eye group of 38, and the mixed preference group of 16 both placed the sequence in a left-right direction, as in reading, while the right-hand-left-eye group placed the pictures from right to left.

At the end of their first grade year the children were all given the Stone-Webster Test in Beginning Reading. The results showed no differences among the three groups in reading achievement. Inconsistent hand-eye preference appeared in no way to have affected the reading progress of these children.

The children who had placed the pictures in right-to-left sequence during the test program in kindergarten were given a similar test at the end of their first grade experience. Twenty-one of the twenty-two children now arranged the pictures in a left-to-right sequence, and only one persisted in the right-to-left arrangement. Apparently left-to-right directional habits in reading had influenced this performance strongly. The children had applied what they had learned in reading to picture arrangement as well.

At the beginning of third grade similar tests were made, and no difference among the groups could be found. The authors conclude that in these superior children, hand-eye preference in no way influenced reading achievement. They suggest, however, that this study has important implications for teachers:

That, since to read English, children must learn to begin at the left and move toward the right, sufficient practice must be given in learning to scrutinize reading material in the correct direction to overcome the tendency on the part of right-hand-left-eyed children to move in the opposite direction.

Hence, although, eye preference in itself has been said to be of little importance, the combination of preference for the right hand and left eye should be identified in first graders so that special attention can be given to helping them form good habits of left-to-right eye movement.

The study also showed that children with mixed hand and eye preference make no unusual number of reversal errors, and that they make satisfactory progress in reading if the proper type of instruction is given. The authors conclude that "classroom teachers of bright children can teach reading to first graders without concern about eye-hand preference except in very unusual cases."

"Sex Differences in Reading Achievement in the Elementary Grades" by Mildred C. Hughes

During the past few years hardly a month has passed without the publication of some report on sex differences in school achievement and for reading. The more frequent conclusion has been that girls are accelerated developmentally and in language in the early years and they are superior to boys in reading achievement at every point above first grade entrance. The study reported here used as subjects boys and girls in Grades III through VIII in two pub-

lic schools in the Chicago metropolitan area.

No significant differences were found in intelligence between boys and girls at any grade level. At third grade level the girls as a group were found to be more than half a year ahead of the boys, at fourth grade level nearly a half-year ahead. But by fifth grade the boys had made up the difference.

The investigator has drawn from these findings some sound and helpful conclusions for teachers. She believes that since these differences are to be found, and are independent of intelligence, they must be expected, accepted and allowed for. Girls surpassed boys at every level in word discrimination, and almost as consistently in rate of comprehension. Teachers must expect girls to develop skill in both comprehension and speed of reading earlier than boys, and should be aware that though the boys "catch up" in the middle grades, a period of always doing second best or poorly may be very influential in the formation of attitudes toward reading, which are likely to be established in the early school years. Children feel school discouragements or "inadequacies" very keenly at the time when, as a group, the boys are lagging behind the girls in reading achievement.

A number of possible causes have been mentioned for this difference in school achievement. Among them are factors of growth, maturation and development, sex differences in interest and motivation, the effect of women teachers on boys' school adjustment, and the likelihood that girls may receive passing grades for lower levels of achievement. Perhaps the teaching materials used are not sufficiently attractive to boys. Whatever the cause, teachers can be more effective if they are aware that this difference in achievement is widespread, and that in time, with good teaching, it will be eliminated.

* * *

Special attention is due to Parts II and III of the Appendix of this volume, in which are to be found some very useful lists of materials. Part II contains lists of

Materials to Develop Word Recognition and Vocabulary

Materials Especially Adapted to Increase Comprehension

Materials to Increase Rate of Reading

Part III by Mary A. Eakins contains a list of Trade Books for Poor Readers, each title followed by an interest level and a difficulty level.

* * *

"An Individualized Reading Program for the Elementary Teacher." N. Dean Evans. *Elementary English*, Vol. 30, No. 5, May 1953.

Here is a detailed description of how to carry on reading instruction through the use of children's self-selected reading. The necessity for a wealth of reading materials, owned by the school and borrowed from every possible cooperating agency, is emphasized. Classroom organization and scheduling, record-keeping techniques, the teaching of skills by means of small flexible groupings, the use of the individual vocabulary test, and evaluation methods are the subjects of brief but specific comments.

Three Books and a Booklet Too Good to Miss

Edited by Nova Nestrick
Reading Editor
The Macmillan Company

DURLAND, FRANCES CALDWELL, *Creative Dramatics for Children*. Yellow Springs, Ohio: The Antioch Press, 1952. $1.50.

Written out of a wealth of personal experience with children's productions, this book has much to offer on ways to bring children's creative abilities to the fore. The author makes clear the difference between formal or coached dramatics and those which are a product of the child mind. The latter are the only ones which have real value.

Novices in creative dramatics will find a practical approach to developing plays with groups and reassurance on how to meet difficulties in rehearsals. Mrs. Durland gives a detailed description of how children can move from listening to a story, to playing it, to evolving a play. Always she stresses the value to the individual child. "Each child has equal opportunity since the goal is not the production but education of the individual."

Teachers who have given many plays will find special interest in the chapters in which stories are analyzed for their dramatic potential. Mrs. Durland has the ability to see a story in terms of acts and scenes and to impart that technique to others.

She warns against taking over the child's part of the work, and sets definite homework tasks for the teacher. First is to select story material which has dramatic qualities with many possibilities for action. She must be thoroughly acquainted with the values inherent in the story and know which are the high points to be stressed. And she must have a clear concept of the author's idea of the characters.

There is no magic formula—growth is slow, it is difficult for a child to find words with which to clothe his thoughts and feelings. Frequently the teacher is tempted to step in and tell him what to say, what action to use. But if she forebears, Mrs. Durland promises, "Group experience of the highest order is one of the by-products. Interest, enthusiasm and joy are shared alike as well as responsibility and hard work."

Florence Liss
Editor, Teacher Edition
Junior Scholastic Magazine

DAWSON, MILDRED A., *Teaching Language in the Grades*. Yonkers-On-Hudson, New York: World Book Company, 1951. $3.92.

In this lucidly written and pleasantly designed book, Dr. Dawson has

combined brief acounts of the results of recent research on the learning and teaching of language, together with discussions of the direct application of these findings to classroom activities.

She first approaches her subject from its general aspects; the development of language facility in children; the basic language program, its objectives and organization in the elementary school; and the place of literature, vocabulary, and basic oral and written skills in the language program. She then proceeds to discuss specific classroom activities and teaching methods at the various grade levels, including both the group as a whole and its individual members.

Because of its excellent organization and concrete suggestions for methods, objectives, and evaluations of teaching the language arts, this book should be a valuable aid to the beginning teacher and a rich source of reference and refresher materials for the experienced teacher.

June Novick
Assistant Editor
The Macmillan Company

STENDLER, CELIA BURNS, AND MARTIN, WILLIAM E. *Intergroup Education in Kindergarten-Primary Grades.* New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953.

This small but timely book should be included on the "must" list of parents, teachers, church workers, and other persons who are concerned with eliminating prejudices and building healthy attitudes in young children toward people of different enthnic, racial, religious, and socio-economic groups. Written in a simple and readable style, it contains many useful ideas for the beginner as well as the seasoned worker in intergroup relations. Not the least useful part of this book is the section which presents a list of annotated books for children, lists of books and pamphlets for parents and teachers, and a brief description of holidays of intercultural significance.

Wanda Robertson
Professor of Education
University of Utah
Salt Lake City, Utah

"Good Education for Older Children in the Elementary School" by Adele Franklin, Constance Coveney, Alfred Ellison and Mabel Hawkins; foreword by Frances Mayfarth. Published by New York State Council for Early Childhood Education, New York, 1953. 60 cents. (Order from Box 98, Queens College, Flushing, New York.)

THIS IS a valuable, suggestive and interesting little booklet (58 pages), exceedingly useful for those who deal with children in the upper elementary grades (fourth to sixth.) Three classroom teachers, in three different kinds of school, describe how they organized their classes for group and creative activities, how the children with their teacher as participant and provider of the necessary environment, planned and carried out their own curriculum. The other six chapters generalize on these direct experiences and present a sound, modern and practical philosophy of education.

The booklet is excellent in all that it does. Yet there are two things that it does not do. Clearly within its scope would be some suggestion as to the use of sociometric grouping. And a booklet with as broad a title as "Good Education for Older Children" should either state that it is not attempting to show how academic skills can be mastered by children of widely varying maturity, or else should include a chapter on the subject. Neither of these two important aspects of the teacher's work is treated.

The teachers who report their experiences did group their children and describe some of the criteria for forming the groups as they did. The criteria are sound and the groups were effective. Might they not have been even more effective and more readily applied by the reader to her own class, if the established and scientific techniques of sociometry had been used along with the common sense criteria?

The omission of suggestions as to the acquisition of academic skills is more serious. For example, there is a difference between seeing the need for an arithmetic process and how it can be usefully applied, and, on the other hand, the acquisition of real skill in the use of the process. The functional setting for arithmetic and all other skill subjects is abundantly developed in this booklet. The development of the skills at the appropriate time by each child is ignored, except for an occasional passing remark.

It should, however, be stated that adaptation to individual differences in the creative and social activities is well illustrated in the booklet. Every teacher of Grades 4, 5, and 6 will find it interesting.

Carleton Washburne
Brooklyn College
Brooklyn, New York

Things They Wonder About

Teachers and school procedures are among the things that children wonder about according to the returns in a survey of the wonderings of some 6,000 boys and girls in the elementary grades. Here are some of their comments on the subject:

I have been wondering do teachers really have pets? They say they don't of course but it seems as though there are two or three girls in my room that always get to do everything.

I wonder why the teachers always scold you when you don't have your lessons done or when you don't get a few problems right. I wonder what all this hard studying does to me.

I wonder why school doesn't end. It is getting tiresome just sitting in these wiggley seats.

I wonder if I could get my work in on time. I wish I could be faster than I am.

I wonder why we have to have these old tests. I just seem to tell the teacher things she knows already. It worries me.

I wonder how old my teacher is. I like teachers that laughs. My first grade teacher never laughs. But my third grade teacher laughs a lot.

Reading Council Board Makes Plans for the Year

At an all-day meeting of the Executive Board of the International Council for the Improvement of Reading Instruction, plans were made for the coming year. The meeting was held at the Hotel Biltmore in New York City on October 25.

Attending the meeting were Paul A. Witty, President; Margaret Robinson, President-Elect; Albert J. Harris, Past President; and the following directors: Ruth Strang, Emmett A. Betts and Nancy Larrick. Also attending were William D. Sheldon, Membership Chairman; H. Alan Robinson, Publicity Chairman; and Donald L. Cleland, Executive Secretary-Treasurer.

Dr. Cleland reported a paid membership of 2,500 with close to 700 others whose membership dues are expected within the next month. There are now 38 local Reading Councils affiliated with the International Council.

Margaret Robinson, Program Chairman, announced plans for the meeting to be held on February 16 as part of the annual conference of the American Association of School Administrators in Atlantic City. Details of this meeting are announced on page 128.

The next meeting of the Executive Board will be held in Atlantic City on February 16, 1954.

New Local Reading Councils Are Being Formed

THE PERSONS listed below have requested information about forming local councils of the I.C.I.R.I. Others who are interested are asked to get in touch with the person in their area who is now considering formation of a council. Additional names of interested persons may be found listed in the October, 1953 issue on page 62.

Alabama, Mrs. M. L. Zuber, 210 S. 3rd St., Opelika.

Arkansas, J. Kendall Hoggard, El Dorado City Schools, El Dorado.

California, Edward T. Clark, 7575 El Cajon Blvd., La Mesa.

Georgia Davis, 118 W. Liberty St., Santa Maria.

D. G. Laughlin, 1539 E. Howard St., Pasadena 7.

Delwyn G. Schubert, 1855 N. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles 39.

Canada, Frances Poleschuk, Vickers Heights P. O., Ft. William, Ontario.

District of Columbia, Mary E. Coleman, 802 21st St., N.W., Washington 20.

Georgia, Jack Groves, 323 E. Doyle St., Toccoa.

Illinois, Aaron D. Peterson, R.R. #1, Godfrey.

Indiana, Mary Maloney, 350 S. Hamilton, Gary.

Maine, George P. Milner, 35 Elm St., Houlton.

New York, Mrs. Lillian C. Myers, Olive Bridge.

Orlando C. Tusler, Prin., School #3, Watervliet.

North Carolina, Arthur Atchley, Route #3, Rutherfordton.

Clara Brown, Route #1, Macclesfield.

Ohio, Bertha C. Gaiser, Painesville Public Schools, Painesville.

C. V. Heiss, Route #2, Ravenna.

Mrs. Pearl Laushell, 1050 Thorndale Dr., Akron 20.

Pennsylvania, Mrs. Frances A. Billet, 536 Second St., Pitcairn.

Mrs. Rachel L. Fair, R. D. #6, Butler.

Dr. Chester McNerney, The Pennsylvania State College, State College.

Mrs. Ruth S. Moore, 55 North Rd., Murrysville.

F. R. Morey, Swarthmore Schools, Swarthmore.

South Carolina, Hattie R. Dingle, P. O. Box 296, State College, Orangeburg.

Tennessee, Mrs. A. B. Bessley, 117 Penna. Ave., Lebanon.

Texas, Mrs. Bonnie M. Harford, 5511 Ellsworth, Dallas.

Wisconsin, Jeanette Rydstrom, 336 S. Adams St., Green Bay.

News of Local Councils

The Texas Southern University Council of Houston sponsored a Language Arts Conference on the campus of T.S.U. in late August. Through the courtesy of the Texas Association for the Improvement of Reading, the Council shared the services of Dr. Guy Bond, Dr. Constance McCullough, Ruth Tooze and Gwen Horsman at the conference.

The Gerald A. Yoakam Council, Pittsburgh, Penna, had a dinner meeting at the University Faculty Club in September. Dr. H. Ward Ewalt, Jr. discussed "Vision for Reading."

The International Council for The Improvement of Reading Instruction

Invites you to attend a meeting to be held during the annual conference of The American Association of School Administrators in Atlantic City

Tuesday, February 16, 1954 at 2:30 p.m.

Chairman: Miss Margaret A. Robinson
Elementary School Principal,
Toronto, Canada

Address: WHERE ARE WE GOING IN READING?
Dr. Paul A. Witty
Northwestern University

Panel Discussion: Dr. Albert J. Harris, *Chairman*
Dr. Nila B. Smith
Dr. Ruth Strang
Dr. Gerald A. Yoakam
Dr. Ethel Maney
Miss Nancy Larrick
Dr. Emmett A. Betts
Dr. A. I. Gates
Mrs. Elsie Stahl

Summary: Dr. William D. Sheldon

Watch your ASAA Program for announcement of the meeting place